# Work From Anywhere

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**06**

" The future is actually about managing people with all the tech tools that we have at our disposal. When it comes to meetings and seminars, although we are not physically present in one place. "

## Initial Thoughts

# Work From Anywhere

**Rushdi Abdul Rahim**
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## Greetings and Salutations,

I sincerely hope that you are well and are keeping you and your family safe wherever you are.

At the time of writing, safety restrictions are being implemented across the country, where the pandemic is changing the way many organisations operate for the foreseeable future. Many are now working to transform their workplaces for the new future of work as governments and businesses tell those with symptoms to self-quarantine and everyone else to practice physical distancing. Remote work is our new reality.

While the pandemic could be temporary, some of the changes it has instigated will be permanent. At MIGHT, we believe organisations should evaluate existing processes and take advantage of new opportunities this crisis brings. Adapting to the new normal will involve identifying what is new and what will discontinue.

|  | **DISCONTINUE** | **NEW** |
|---|---|---|
| **NEW** | Things we do immediately to respond specifically to the crisis | Things we do and try that is continued even in post crisis |
| **DISCONTINUE** | Things we stopped during the crisis and proven not suitable for the future | Things we stopped during the crisis but requires to be picked up again |

■ **NEW PRACTICE**  ■ **OLD PRACTICE**

The question is, are organisations and their people – both management and employees - prepared for this? Short answer: no. No organisations are set up for the unprecedented scale and scope where work-from-home arrangements had to be made immediately. Of course, there are some organisations that were more ready than others. Those that were quick to adapt had these factors to thank:

> " We like to give people the freedom to work where they want, safe in the knowledge that they have the drive and expertise to perform excellently, whether they at their desk or in their kitchen. Yours truly has never worked out of an office, and never will. "
>
> **- Sir Richard Branson -**

### The infrastructure

The organisation and its employees have access to the required hardware and software needed to work remotely, have conference calls, meetings and close collaborations. Everyone has continuous access to the resources they need to be productive as they harness the powers of high-speed internet connection and cloud services.

### The policies

Organisations that are more fluid in terms of working structure and laissez faire in their approach tend to adapt faster in employing the remote work approach. This includes supportive policies that recognises the fact that work is not bound by physical and geographical location, and those that emphasise on results rather than physical presence.

### The people

Each employee's skill set, willingness, and trust come into play. Their ability to adapt and adopt, learn and make use of virtual tools available, plus willingness to embrace the new normal allowed them to successfully pivot. There should also ideally be trust that the people will continue to work and be productive. Unfortunately, I have seen so many organisations lacking in these qualities, making it difficult to embrace necessary changes.

So how do organisations move forward and prepare for the future of work in post-pandemic futures?

## Accelerate digital transformation

The pandemic has forced many organisations to pick up the pace of their digital transformation projects. The crisis should provide ample justification they need to embark on better digital infrastructure and re-evaluate existing processes and practices related to physical workplace design.

## Establish a hybrid work environment.

Permanent remote work may not be feasible for all organisations, but a hybrid approach is. Identify which roles and processes that can be performed virtually, as well as which working styles best suit individual employees to ensure optimum productivity.

## Embrace micro-events

Organisations will have to reimagine corporate events, conferences, and business travel. Even when restrictions ease, it would be some time before people felt it's safe to gather in large groups. The pandemic has shown that there is the ability to connect more people at a lower cost where events combine in-person and virtual activities. Therefore, micro-events will likely become the new norm, even after the virus has been contained.

## Re-evaluate operational costs and employee benefits

As organisations are faced with economic pressure, there is a pressing need to lower operational costs. With more remote employees, organisations can reduce office space and save on rental and utilities. Employee perks and benefits can be replaced with tailor-made alternatives. Furthermore, without the confines of geography, businesses can hire more diverse talent for less in markets with lower costs of living.
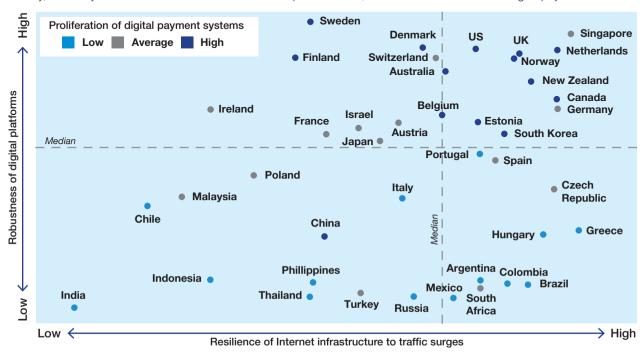
However, the points mentioned above do not constitute a 'one size fits all' solution. It is worth noting that not all work could be done virtually. This will depend on the nature of the work and business niche. Which brings us to the question: Why is there a need to evaluate and take stock of the situation, and how does this impact each organisation?

I hope you continue to practice #physicaldistancing and adhere to the necessary standard operating procedures (SOP) being outlined by our health authorities. Stay safe, and stay productive.

## DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
# Where Working from Home Works Best

Which countries are well positioned to have their citizens work remotely? Researchers examined how 42 economies stack up on three measures of readiness; the robustness of video conferencing and other digital platforms needed for business continuity, the ability of internet infrastructure to withstand spikes in traffic, and the existence of secure digital payment methods.



*Source: Imagining a Digital Economy for Alt IDEA 2030 initiative, the Fletcher School, Tufts University*

# From The Desk Of
# Datuk Dr. Mohd Yusoff Sulaiman

# Trust, Teamwork & Technology

### The forces
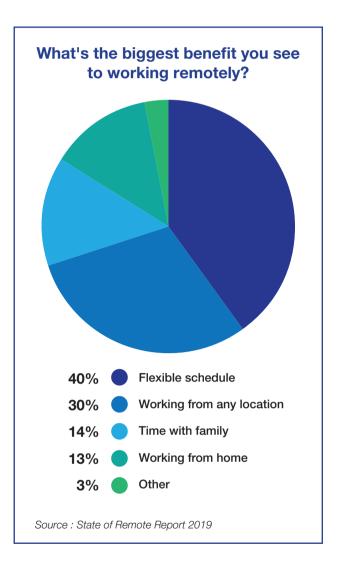
Social distancing and travel restrictions have placed us in a situation of many 'firsts'. The 'Work from Home' approach adopted by many organisations is perhaps the most apparent. This new norm of working from anywhere raises issues varying from the productivity of remote working to managing trust between employees and employers. The 'future' of work is already here, and leaders need to take a proactive stance in understanding how work will be done and how that shift impacts the workforce.

The concept of work will continue to centre on interaction, ideation and documentation of varying complexity, but the way in which these take place is changing. At the time of writing, the COVID19 vaccines are for most parts, ready for active roll-out. Globally, companies are thinking of the next step in working modes – either ending working from home completely, adopting a work from anywhere policy or a hybrid of the two. Understandably, organisations would need to adopt a solution that best fits their business needs and exemplify their unique version of the new work culture and environment.

### Trust

While we focus on leveraging on technology and strengthening infrastructure to support a working model, one has to bear in mind the key element to successful integration: TRUST.

For some employees with predominantly desk-based office roles, working from home may be a preferred choice primarily due to the flexibility it affords and greater control over their work schedule. However, infrastructural limitations both physical and IT and connectivity related may result in a less than ideal home working environment as opposed to what a physical office can offer.

### What's the biggest benefit you see to working remotely?



| | |
|---|---|
| **40%** 🔵 | **Flexible schedule** |
| **30%** 🔵 | **Working from any location** |
| **14%** 🔵 | **Time with family** |
| **13%** 🟢 | **Working from home** |
| **3%** 🟢 | **Other** |

*Source : State of Remote Report 2019*

> **Technologies help level the playing field; whether one is working from anywhere or being present at the office, in terms of communication, collaboration or presence. This paves the way for enhanced trust.**

Employers also need to establish trust in and with the employees to work remotely recognising that it is not about the hours spent at the workstation, but about productivity and using time effectively to produce and deliver results. Employees are empowered to manage their own time and workload without the infrastructural support of the office and structure of their teams. Leadership and learning are key to brave the changes with trust between the individuals within the organisation for better communication, promotion of transparency and leading by example.

Establishing trust can be a challenge in a remote-working situation but strong empowerment, accountability and support can promote loyalty and encourage productivity. The lack of it may result in employees looking for better opportunities elsewhere.(** at this present time, this is not quite a major issue.)

## Teamwork

Communication is key in teamwork. It facilitates work synergy with clear directions, relayed expectation and defined roles and deliverables of team members effectively and timely. Monitoring progress remotely is also a challenge. Without physical and face to face interactions it is easy to miss out critical information and context for smooth teamwork synergy. In working remotely within a team, everyone should be on board in the discussions and no one should be left out of any important team conversations.

## Technology

Doubtless, technology become a critical component of remote working. It facilitates trust building through a semblance of face-to-face interaction and communications between team members working remotely. However, risks of data security and readiness of systems and regulations should be well anticipated. Laptops, email, and smartphones are now enhanced with access to multimedia-rich communications, including instant messaging and the interactive editing of documents. With the aid of video conferencing platforms, dialogue sessions can be done remotely with a genuine sense of connectedness and spontaneity - provided there is satisfactory video quality and reliability that improve the experience and deliver all the elements of a person-to-person interaction. Technologies help level the playing field; whether one is working from anywhere or being present at the office, in terms of communication, collaboration or presence. This paves the way for enhanced trust. On top of tools that smoothen communication, a number of work management applications also exist which are perfectly suited for organising remote teams. These come with user-friendly interfaces and features designed to improve collaboration among team members and provide a variety of reporting capabilities.

While there exist many plus points of working remotely anytime and anywhere, the new work culture can also be intrusive. Some may suffer from work from home fatigue as there is no defined line to decompress, to unwind and have a proper lunch as oppsed to working in an office environment. Managing generational gap is another challenge. Younger, more tech-savvy employees may not have issues with remote working while their older colleagues may prefer a different approach to work-life balance and team dynamics. In the long run, there may be a decay in "connectivity" if a full work from anywhere policy is adopted. Issues involving the lower level employees must also be considered as they may not enjoy overtime payments and other allowances during the work from home period. Employees commuting via public transport to work may have a different set of worries and requirements for flexibility while others may suffer from fear-of-missing-out (FOMO) and anxiety.

Therefore, leaders deciding on a remote work design for their companies should not be transfixed only on the availability of technological solutions in their decision making. Questions on the limitations of working from home should also be addressed including personal considerations such as child-care and shrinking income streams of homes affected by the pandemic. The key to effective handling of the transition is open communication and the sharing of concerns as well as the implementation of sound precautionary measures. This is a game-changer for the work-from-home scene and for businesses in general. It potentially solves issues related to timing and logistics and can also creates a connected and proactive team culture, bonded by trust.

# Abdul Halim Bisri
## Senior Vice President, MIGHT Head Of CASD

MIGHT's Corporate Affairs and Strategy Division Senior Vice President, Abd. Halim Bisri is a core member of MIGHT's strategic practices. With more than 30 years of experience in corporate strategy, research, technology transfer, engineering and financial services, Abd Halim is an expert in the design and execution of strategic plans. Prior to MIGHT, Abd. Halim was Malaysian Technology Development Corporation's (MTDC) head of research & Information following an 8 year stint as a senior engineer at Motorola before joining MIGHT's ranks. In his role, Abd. Halim, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Miami, Florida, helps MIGHT and its partners explore tech-driven transformational growth opportunities.

## WORKING FROM ANYWHERE

### MIGHT prepares work from home as a hint of the future

**Balancing the nature of MIGHT's business-as-usual, concerns, and getting work done**

For us at MIGHT, COVID19 will not dampen what we do. If anything, it figures to be more dynamic than ever. In response to the current situation, we highly encourage our staff to embrace remote working. This is really no accident. We have long mooted this idea of working from anywhere—mobile and fluid—not confined to being engaged at work only at the office. I guess, tapping into our people anywhere has become more important than having all our team members in one place. In fact, we have a policy where we make sure all of our staff are equipped with portable devices to support the transition. Our staff are allowed to purchase the devices on their own and a certain portion of the cost is supported by the company. In return, we expect our staff to be mobile in interacting with our stakeholders, especially industry players and MIGHT members as this can be done via various means today.

In dealing with the pandemic, we are making sure that our plans remain on track despite the constraints we are currently facing. Thankfully, the framework has already been embedded on the back of our minds years before the pandemic arrived. As long as our staff are connected, they can perform their duties just as ably, either through remote or in-person work. Nowadays, they can get in touch with our main office from wherever they are via mobile facilities to conduct meetings or discussions. We believe that the ability to work remotely, while causing its fair share of disruption, will enable many to live and work in new ways and places.

We now know that the future of work is flexibility. Therefore, going forward, remote work has to be viewed as equally important as in-person work. Surely a lot of our old habits need rethinking and we need to change our default setting to settle into this new era or future of work. After all, we are not just working from home. We are working from home during a pandemic.

> # The future is actually about managing people with all the tech tools that we have at our disposal.

To an extent, technologies such as video conferencing have done us a great deal in helping us to arrest the spread of COVID19. Remote meetings may feel awkward for now, but these are the challenges that we have to grapple with.

What's more, the future is actually about managing people with all the tech tools that we have at our disposal. When it comes to meetings and seminars, although we are not physically present in one place, technologies such as WebEx, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Zoom allow us to convene all these functions adequately. These tech solutions may offer us more in terms of remote working in the future. All we have to do is identify which one is the most suitable for our needs. Objectively, despite being socially distanced, we can still Implement a lot of things and this will be the basis the future's holistic working environment will be built around.

However, with all these remote meeting tools, everyone's a bit concerned about security. Right now, as far as security goes, I can say that we have it covered. With respect to our confidential information, we have a policy that governs the practice of our people. For example, information with respect to the company's confidentiality is to be treated with the highest level of integrity by our people. In terms of security, we always advise our people to be mindful of the equipment they use, keep and carry with them. And we follow closely the guidelines provided by the government in order to monitor security compliance with respect to information.

### Role of technology in accelerating the transition and preparing a holistic working environment

In short, we will intensify a lot of the things that we see a need for during COVID19. For starters, we will promote wide scale communication of virtual meetings with our stakeholders, especially our MIGHT members, agency partners, government departments as well as board members. Thankfully, meetings and brainstorming sessions can now be done remotely.

At the same time, we are also preparing our office with the right facilities such as audio and video equipment so that we can communicate seamlessly and comfortably with people outside of MIGHT. Recently, we received a visit by the Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation, YB Khairy Jamaluddin, where he chaired a meeting that convened international participants from China, Singapore, Europe and others online. It was a fruitful meeting, lots of good ideas were exchanged without much fuss and most importantly, the agendas of the meeting were met. I would like to note here that this mode of working has alleviated concerns from our colleagues abroad. Evidently, there's really nothing to worry about and we can all buy into this idea of agile working. But there's still so much more to develop, whether in terms of remote work, or technology that actually makes hybrid in-person and remote meetings feel less awkward.

Onto performance evaluation, we admit, remote working is still quite new to us. We managed to implement work from anywhere only recently this year. Nevertheless, we are currently putting together an evaluation system to assess our people's remote working performance so that we can thoroughly gauge the organisation's effectiveness as a whole.

### Addressing the concerns related to communication, data security and regulations as a high-technology organisation?

So far, we have received plenty of feedback from our departmental heads. It is not surprising that most of them feel that working from home has improved their productivity and efficiency. No longer do they need to spend hours commuting to and from work or scramble from one location to another to attend meetings. All it takes now is a few clicks and they can effortlessly jump from one meeting to another.

However, a proper evaluation system needs to be in place so that we can monitor our people's productivity and performance. Working from home has become a marriage of convenience, however, the integrity of work that gets done should be just as good as in-person work, if not better. This

is what we need to closely monitor, as does with any new trend. Due to the pandemic, we understand that our staff have to use their own devices and connectivity, and to aid our collective cause, MIGHT has since provided additional allowances for this.

And then there's compliance to the SOPs. COVID19 is not going away any time soon, so, at all times, we need to make sure our people comply with the SOPs outlined by Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN), Jabatan Perdana Menteri (JPM) and the Ministry of Health (MOH). If the SOPs aren't in place, our fight against the virus will fail, and we'll end up right back where we were before. In view of this, we have set up a dedicated team to monitor the movement of our staff as well as to control the crowd present at our main office to stop the spread of COVID19.

We regularly remind our people to wear face masks when they are at our office compound along with adhering to other social distancing measures. In addition, we encourage external parties to carry out meetings with us online. But this is also a huge shift and apart from this, we have implemented an e-tracking system for those who want to come to the office and they will be evaluated from the locations and zones they come from. This is done to make sure MIGHT's premise is well protected.

Going forward, with all these new ways of working, our goal is to strengthen our dedication to MIGHT's shared cause. Ultimately, we would like to showcase an exemplary model of remote working to our stakeholders and the general public. Being under the purview of the Ministry of Science, Technology, & Innovation (MOSTI), I think, MIGHT's readiness bodes well with the ministry's intent to see all of us becoming mobile and agile. Despite the pandemic, we firmly believe that remote working can be just as fulfilling as it doesn't diminish our people's dynamics.
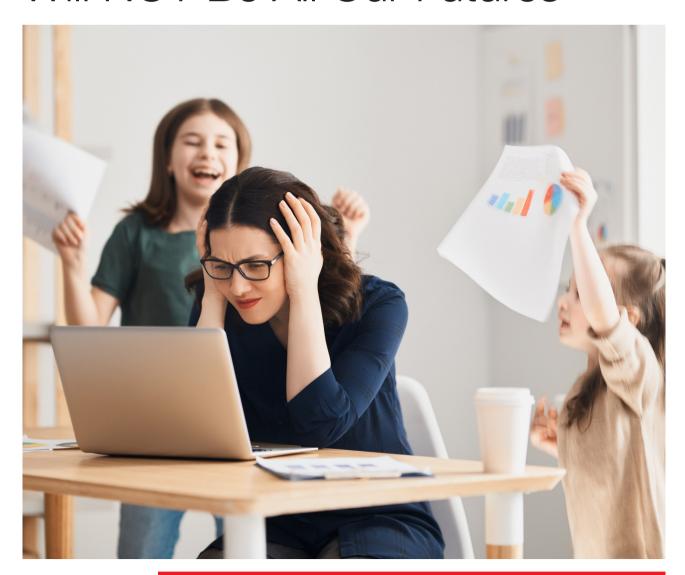
We are also well aware that this practice will most likely continue into the future. At MIGHT, we welcome this new norm with open arms, and we believe there will be light at the end of the tunnel. Last but not least, as an entity that champions the creation of a high-tech nation, we can assure you that remote working, for us, is a language of choice, not just a faint idea or an afterthought. Hopefully, all these new ways of thinking about the centrality of work in our lives will contribute to Malaysia's push in becoming a high-tech, high-productivity nation.



**"**

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**"**

# Why 'Work-From-Anywhere' Will NOT Be All Our Futures



**Liz Alexander, PhD**
Futurist. Author.
Consultant. Speaker.

Dr. Liz Alexander has been named one of the world's top female futurists. She combines futures thinking with over 30 years' communications expertise to produce publications that showcase the advice of fellow futurists on issues including the future of education, and how businesses can practically benefit from working with the futures community.

Dr. Liz is the author/co-author of 22 nonfiction books published worldwide, that have reached a million global readers, and has contributed to leading US technology magazine Fast Company, Psychology Today, and journals such as Knowledge Futures, and World Futures Review. She earned her PhD in Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin.

What a difference a year makes. In the November/ December 2019 issue of the Harvard Business Review (HBR), an associate professor of organisational behaviour at the Harvard Business School, together with the CEO of an organisational analytics company, published an article entitled The Truth About Open Offices. I was interested in their findings as I have always been sceptical about the claims of increased productivity and collaboration that design experts had promised and business executives hoped for. Based on real-world experiments conducted by these two researchers and others, that proved to be the case.

I mention this in relation to a recently proposed model for the future of work. Because, in a separate finding reported in that Open Offices article, these authors state that, "In general, the further apart people are, the less they communicate," adding:

> " (R)emote work…tends to significantly inhibit collaboration even over digital channels. While studying a major technology company from 2008-2012, we found that remote workers communicated nearly 80% less about their assignments than co-located team members did; in 17% of projects, they didn't communicate at all." "

Their conclusion being that if you want people meeting milestones in a timely manner, remote working isn't the answer.

Yet almost a year into the coronavirus pandemic, working from home has become a necessity for many. Rather than risk the spread of COVID19 in workplaces—especially ones designed as an open plan—more people are being asked to work from home (WFH). As someone who has done so for the past 30+ years, I'm well aware how less than ideal this is for most people in terms of their productivity, ability to collaborate effectively, and sense of isolation. Although I have no children to care for, and a dedicated, well-equipped study in which to work, I live in a condo where on-going construction noise makes it hard to listen into Zoom or Skype calls, and an upstairs neighbour's child treats their unit like a playground or gym. Working from home isn't all it's cracked up to be, is it?

Yet the cover story of the November/December 2020 issue of Harvard Business Review entitled, The Work from Anywhere Future, takes WFH a step further. Written by another associate professor from the Harvard Business School, Prithwiraj Choudhury, this article and subsequent HBR podcast implies that a new working model called Work-From-Anywhere (WFA) is not only gaining ground but is suitable for everyone in an organisation from the intern to the CEO.

As with open plan offices, I decided to look beyond the hype.

## What is Work-From-Anywhere (WFA)?

According to Professor Choudhury, WFA differs from working-from-home (WFH) in one significant way: "geographical flexibility." To highlight this difference, some magazines covering the topic illustrate the text with pictures of desks strangely floating on lakes or deckchairs on exotic beaches, although HBR merely chose to illustrate Choudhury's article with a range of architecturally varied homes! From what I gather, WFA simply means working from home anywhere in the world. You might expect someone like me, who has taken advantage of such geographical flexibility throughout my career, to be a wholehearted advocate of WFA. But it's precisely because of that experience that I can see its many downfalls and limitations.

Let us turn back for a moment to those studies on openplan offices. As one Business Insider article ("Silicon Valley's open offices are probably over thanks to the coronavirus—but they were always bad for employees anyway"- August 9th, 2020) pointed out, arguments against open plan offices go beyond lower productivity and increased distraction. It cited how employees "felt pressure to work longer and harder because of their lack of privacy." How will WFA be any different?

While I have taken advantage of geographical flexibility to live in Malaysia, I still—guess what?—work from home. What this means is that when I have to jump on Skype or Zoom calls with business connections in the UK and US my normal working day goes out the window to accommodate the time differences. Luckily, this is minimal as I'm not a full-time worker but could be hugely problematic for someone who is. Professor Choudhury believes that the difficulties of arranging synchronous meetings with team members living all over the world can be overcome by setting up an asynchronous system instead. That might work within organisations originally set up to employ people who "work from anywhere" but imagine transitioning to such an arrangement where, say, five team members live in one country and a sixth lives somewhere ten or twelve hours ahead. Isn't it more likely that the WFA individual would be asked to accommodate the majority and be on calls and online meetings in the middle of their night?
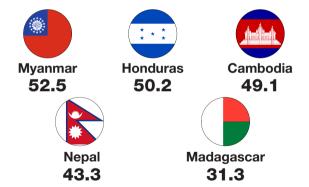
## An issue of access

While the theory behind geographical flexibility—a rather tenuous difference between WFA and WFH—sounds reasonable, it presupposes that the countries in which the itinerant workers choose to live have robust Internet access. From the GSMA Mobile Connectivity Index rankings of 2019, I noticed that the most reliable, highly connected countries all have a high cost of living:

**Australia**
**90.5\***

**Singapore**
**89.3**

**New Zealand**
**87.6**

**Switzerland**
**87.1**

**Norway**
**86.9**

**Malaysia**
**69.2**

An adventurous knowledge worker might hanker to relocate to more exotic and much cheaper locations like

**Myanmar**
**52.5**

**Honduras**
**50.2**

**Cambodia**
**49.1**

**Nepal**
**43.3**

**Madagascar**
**31.3**

for example, but would be ill-advised to do so if their full-time employment depended on a consistent, dependable digital connection.

\*denotes that country's connectivity score.

## How 'global' are we, psychologically?

Infrastructure challenges aside, it always fascinates me how theorists proposing new working models like WFA ignore basic human psychology. Regardless of the big, wide world we have at our disposal digitally, it appears the majority of human beings prefer to operate locally. As reported in the Global Connectedness Index 2020, sponsored by DHL and subtitled, Globalisation in a Distancing World, only 12% of Facebook friends are located in different countries to the user. Preferred online news outlets are "almost always" based in the reader's home country as opposed to overseas sources. And 75% of Twitter followers live in the same country as the people they follow. Most notably, given the focus of that report overall, "Just about 10% of consumer e-commerce transactions in 2018 were international."

Likewise, the workers that Professor Choudhury espouses as being the vanguard of this future trend towards WFA are the exception, not the rule. One case study he cites extensively is the United States Patent and Trademark Office. But as another article pointed out, patent examiners don't need to coordinate much with their co-workers to be effective in their jobs. Nevertheless, in an earlier article in HBR entitled "Is it time to let employees work from anywhere?" Choudhury writes that: "We observed that WFA (patent) examiner productivity increased more if they were located within 25 miles of other WFA examiners…" working within the same technological unit. Which seems to support earlier research findings on remote working that teams work better when able to connect physically with each other, not on the other side of the world.

It's also worth pointing out that the US Patent Office requires workers to spend their first two years at their head office in Alexandria, Virginia. They then transition into a work-from-home phase before they can fully WFA. (There's a trust issue implied in that, wouldn't you agree?) When they do, they must pay their own travel expenses to visit HQ, up to 12 days a year. I would certainly find it expensive and inconvenient to do that from south-east Asia. Yet such location requirements hold true for the "vast majority, 95%" of organisations willing to recruit remote workers, according to a study by FlexJobs reported by CNBC's Make It online website, not least to comply with "employment tax law requirements."

## No panacea

Clive Wilkinson, the architect of the Googleplex, that bastion of open floor plan office space, once told Fast Company, "We're inventing a new world, why do we need the old world?" Here's why: You can make all the futuristic pronouncements you want, designing workspaces and imagining new work models to support them, but the vast majority of human beings are beset by "old world" psychology. While a small minority of lone wolf knowledge workers may thrive on traveling the world as digital nomads, having proven skills and talent to support such a lifestyle within an organisational culture that trusts them, most people—and their managers—prefer to be "co-located" in a place in which they can interact, formally and informally, with familiar faces. Consider how annoyed people become if someone is sitting in "their spot," during a workshop, or how the fad for "hot-desking" caused disruptions that eroded morale and increased workplace anxiety. Most workers, like it or not, are creatures of habit who prefer face-to-face interactions, want work to be contained within a certain number of hours, and whose "geographical flexibility" is constrained by family commitments, cost of living, and access to reliable digital communications.

While Professor Choudhury posits an interesting new theory about the future of work, with the number of flaws in the WFA concept I don't see it being embraced universally anytime soon.

# Working From Home In Public Service Of Malaysia

**Rusdi Bin Yahya**

Deputy Director
Research, Planning And
Policy Division
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Of Malaysia

Rusdi Yahya is the Deputy Director of Research, Planning and Policy Division at the Public Service Department of Malaysia. A graduate of the University of Malaya with a Bachelor's degree in Economics (Public Administration) in 1996 and holder of a Master's degree from the Graduate School of Political Science and Economics, Meiji University, Japan since 2007 Rusdi has broad experience across public and private sectors having joined the public service in 1997. He has served various departments such as the Economic Planning Unit and Public Service departments with key involvement in strategic planning, policy research, consultation and project negotiation.

**Nur Iskandar Bin Nur Dzainuddin**

Deputy Director
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Public Service
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Nur Iskandar bin Nur Dzainuddin is a deputy director of research, planning and policy at the Public Service Department. Nur Iskandar began his public service career as an assistant director at the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPNHEP). In this role, Nur Iskandar oversaw distributive wholesale and retail trade in 2003 before he was promoted to the role of Principal Assistant Secretary. In 2015, Nur Iskandar pursued a career in human resource management at the Public Service Department after completing his master's degree in business administration from the Graduate School of Business, National University of Malaysia. Since then, Nur Iskandar has gathered extensive experience in human resource management's operations and policy. With the experience nurtured over the years, Nur Iskandar has been tasked to develop direction-setting frameworks and action plans for the public sector's human resource management.

## Will Working From Home Become the New Normal in the Malaysian Public Service Sector?

Working from home (WFH), and its close counterpart working from anywhere, is not a new concept for Malaysians. It has been discussed academically and practised in various forums and organisations with both private and public sectors offering various opinions on this issue. Generally, new cultures or new norms are not easily accepted in this country which is strongly influenced by baby boomers. Traditionally, the older generation associate formal work with being at a certain place and within a determined time frame. Anything else outside of this is not considered "working". Some may perceive working from home as less productive than working in the office or at a designated workplace. And then, there is the issue of trust where bosses express insistence over 'controlling' their subordinates and enforcing conventional in-person meetings.

### Sentiments Within the Public Service

The Public Service Department (PSD), among others, is responsible for matters related to working hours in the public service, and is constantly reviewing feedback from civil servants as well as stakeholders including concerned groups such as unions who call for improvements in working hours. Usually, proposals received from internal or external parties will be taken to a higher level of the government to be scrutinised on.

Nearly a decade ago, our government began to study the need for public service to have more flexible working hours. This is to achieve better work-life balance through quality time management. Public servants have diverse backgrounds and time management demands which vary according to individual needs. In other words, the flexibility in managing working hours varies according to the needs of each group. On the other hand, cost and time involved are two vital factors behind the need for alternative working arrangements. Flexible working hours and environments are now  necessities in today's modern working culture as the world embraces the work-from-anywhere trend in the wake of COVID19.

Working from home has become a part of human resource management policies that emphasise on for optimal work-life balance among public servants. The public sector is now increasingly supportive of the idea that productivity and efficiency will be enhanced if public servants' lives are well-organised and experience adequate cost of living, stable emotions, conducive working environment and achieve good work-life balance.

### Public Service Commitment Towards Flexible Working Arrangements

During the the 2014 Budget speech, the Prime Minister of Malaysia stressed on the importance of employers implementing Flexible Working Arrangements to enable employees to enjoy good Work-Life Balance (WLB). FWA covers various aspects such as working hours, location of work, work methods and so on.

Furthermore, to strengthen talent management and create a better future for the public service sector, through the 11th Malaysia Plan (11th MP), 2016-2020, the Malaysian government is committed to improving existing working conditions leading towards better work-life balance. This meant an increase / a rise of flexibility in public service while looking into factors such as flexible work hours, compressed work week and teleworking. The same strategy has been emphasised in the Mid-erm Review of the 11th Malaysia Plan, 2018 – 2020, through new priorities and emphases.

Undoubtedly, FWA implementation in the public service sphere aims to provide flexibility to civil servants in order to create an optimal balance between their   career and personal life, which will hopefully eventually improve their performance and productivity.

A study on the implementation of FWA in the private sector jointly undertaken by Talentcorp and ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) concluded that the government should champion the implementation of FWA. In line with efforts to transform public service, the initiative was introduced to make the public service more flexible and better aligned with current human resource management practices.

In May 2014, the PSD conducted a survey to get feedback on the proposed   implementation of the FWA. Fueled by the participation of 6,438 employees , it was discovered that 78% of respondents agreed that FWA should be implemented in public service.  This prompted a pilot project for FWA

> " **The public sector is now increasingly supportive of the idea that productivity and efficiency will be enhanced if public servants' lives are well-organised and experience adequate cost of living, stable emotions, conducive working environment and achieve good work-life balance.** "

that was carried out in 2015, whereby several ministries and departments were selected to participate. Among the departments involved were the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Department of Work and the Attorney General's Chambers. The project was implemented in phases and three modules were involved such as work from home (teleworking), compressed-work week, and flexible working hours.

The project and survey findings have since been used as a foundation in the flexible working arrangement policy in public service. Some issues encountered in the study involved integrity of the workers, lack of ICT to monitor workers whereabouts and inconsistent performance as well as other productivity issues.

What's more notable is that, any policy with regards to working hours in public service must be subject to the regulation as stipulated in the General Order (Chapter G) 1974 and the government circular in force.

## Working From Home In View of the Pandemic

To date, COVID19 has infected more than 95 million and killed more than 2 million people worldwide.  Life as we know it may not be the same again, and no one is able to accurately predict when will normalcy will return.

Prior to the pandemic, the work-from-home culture isn't as widespread in Malaysia but everything changed with the COVID19 pandemic. During unprecedented times, most non-essential business owners did not have many options except to allow employees to work remotely.

It has now become the new norm as companies and employees are being forced to review their priorities to ensure that it works. As for public service, the government has decided that all ministries and departments implement work-from-home policies in their daily operations. Only those providing essential services are allowed to continue operating in the field.

The Malaysian government has taken initial steps to leverage lessons learnt from the MCO WFH experience, paving the way for flexible work arrangements while working with telcos to provide free data for students and workers as well as providing incentives to employers.

In March 2020, the Director-General of Public Service issued a circulated letter as an official directive to implement a work-from-home policy in the public service. It was in line with the Movement Control Order (MCO) implementation which was enforced by the government starting March 18, 2020.

It was a good move for the public service sector as everyone quickly adapted to this unforeseen situation. Public service has taken a positive step by seeing WFH as a necessary policy to be implemented immediately and until the foreseeable future. Regardless how WFH was viewed in the past, it is vital to be implemented as a strategy for the continuity of the government services especially in during these crucial times. Therefore, at the end of 2020, the PSD issued a Service Circular No 5 Year 2020, as an official directive and foundation of guidelines concerning the implementation of WFH within the Malaysian public service sector with effect from January 1, 2021. This points to the benefits that the public service sector can enjoy when agility is practised.

It is also a good start for public service in setting good examples for best human resource practices when it comes to nationwide HR policies. The policy will be reviewed and improved upon from time to time based on current changes whenever needed in the future. What With the many advancements in IT being introduced at break-neck speed, it is only fair to say that there is definitely room for improvement when it comes to perfecting this policy.

WFH or work-from-anywhere has a bigger role and strategy in human resource management. The ultimate vision does not only involve working hours or place of work, but also concerns achieving the bigger goal of work-life balance for civil servants. Therefore, WFH policies can be viewed as:

A method of rewarding high-performing civil servants. In addition to financial rewards, productive civil servants can be given non-monetary rewards, such as WFH privileges or facilities. In this scenario, issues related to individuals' performance and productivity should be non-existent because those who were selected would already be high-performing/top performers  civil servants. In this regard, WFH would be a two-pronged strategy in which good work-life balance will be deemed a target without compromising on performance and productivity.

WFH is used as a method which requires officers to be at home for a period of time for auditing and risk mitigation purposes as practiced by some companies within the private sector. In this case, WFH provides a venue for civil servants to be temporarily segregated and does not require his or her presence in the office while investigations or audits are conducted.

While WFH has been implemented in the public service, the policy related to flexible work arrangements can be further improved through the exploration of new work based on new technology advancements such as 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain system, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Robotic Process Automation (RPA).

## WFH Challenges and the Way Forward

The ultimate result of WFH is not limited to simplifying the way people work, but rather, the real outcome is to proliferate benefits beyond an employee's individual productivity. For example, increasing organisational effectiveness and efficiency through cost-cutting as an immediate effect of work-from-home initiatives would be futile if sufficient governance of government accountability on public expenditure remains tough.

Secondly, WFH requires effective and efficient measurement on performance in the long run. Its basics is placed on the all-encompassing improvement of human resource management within the public sector particularly by removing existing workforce segmentations and divisions from functional scheme of services to a specific designated job . Thus, working from home would be objectively tied with a robust performance measurement framework. A position-based organisational structure will specify the exact output and outcome of deliverables required from employees be it for office-based or work-from-home employees. In order to materialise a reform with the expected impact, the abolishment of narrow scheme of services and individual-based pay would be vital.

Those changes would not be achieved easily without political will or more persistently from within the public service/sector* itself. Otherwise, all efforts to simplify flexible public service working arrangements would be wasted if we fail to leverage on employee productivity as well as organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

**PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

# WORK FROM HOME POLICY

## (Service Circular Number 5 of Year 2020)

### Public Service Department (PSD)

**BERKUAT KUASA**

**1 JAN 2021**

## WFH POLICY

Rules and responsibilities of officers performing official tasks from home.

## WFH POLICY PRINCIPALS

Officers can work from home when:

- Instructed by the goverment; or

- Instructed or given permission by the Head of PSD

## RULES

- Always be present at home as the designated workplace within the designated working hours

- Always be reachable within designated working days and/or hours

- Be ready to work from the office or any physical location as instructed by the Head of PSD within a reasonable time frame

- Comply with the rules, regulations and instructions from authorities

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS AND HEAD OF PSD

## HEAD OF PSD

- Disseminate clear instructions or permission in written form

- Oversee officers' tasks and ensure work targets are met

- Ensure all officers comply with rules and regulations

## OFFICERS

- Submit home address as the designated working place during WFH

- Comply with all rules and regulations

- Complete tasks and ensure targets are met

*Source: UKK, JPA*
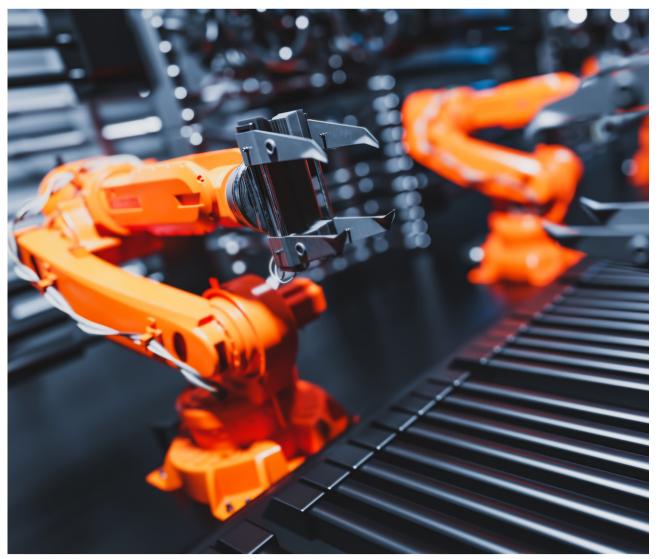
# Workforce 4.0
# The Future Of Work

**Shriram
Ramanathan, PhD**
Director at Lux

Shriram Ramanathan is a director at Lux, and leads the digital team's coverage of industrial big data and analytics. In this role, he has helped clients develop a comprehensive understanding of new business opportunities in several emerging technology areas such as AI, robotics, wearables, IoT, healthcare, clean energy, and advanced materials. In addition, he has helped accelerate innovation within companies by establishing frameworks for lean innovation, design thinking and business model design.

Prior to joining Lux, Shriram founded his own company to develop and commercialise IoT/wearable products to address needs in the healthcare sector. He also has held positions at Cornell University, United Technologies, and Evonik.

Shriram holds a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

## The Many Facets of Workforce Throughout the Years

2020 was the year when the discussion on the Future of Work came to the forefront because of COVID19. However, the idea of work has been undergoing a transition for more than two centuries with the industrial revolution ushering in Workforce 1.0.

As mechanisation and automation gained traction, labourers who had traditionally depended on artisan skills for centuries were forced to rapidly learn mechanical skills, and with economies of scale, efficiency and time management became critical drivers amongst the workforce.

With advances in electronics and computers in the 1970s, industrial automation saw an uptick as we entered the era of Workforce 2.0 in which large parts of work moved from the factory floor to the back office which became the center of activity for most organisations.

The widespread adoption of the Internet in the late 1990s unleashed Workforce 3.0 – the era of remote working. Statistics indicate that, between 2005 and 2018, remote work in the US grew by nearly 173%. Most recent data collected by the US Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that, just before the novel coronavirus hit the world, around 4% to 5% of the US workforce was already working remotely. As the pandemic hit the world, this trend accelerated. A Gartner survey found that 88% of all business organisations all over the world encouraged employees to work from home as COVID19 spread. Another Gallup poll found that, in March 2020, the percentage of US-based workers who said their employers were offering remote work options increased from 39% to 57%.

## When Flexibility and Agility Become the Name of the Game

The pandemic has led to an increased preference amongst employees towards flexible and remote working arrangements. However, there are other underlying long-term demographic and economic trends that promise to – or rather make it imperative that we actively – transform the future of work. For example, developed nations such as Japan and the US are simultaneously facing the twin problem of declining birth rates and an aging workforce (see "Digital Transformation of Oil and Gas") meaning that these countries will likely see labour shortage in the next decade or so which will threaten GDP growth. This labour shortage will be particularly intense for the manufacturing sector in view of the frequent service that aging industrial assets will require, all at a time when the younger generation is leaning towards jobs in information technology or the sharing economy.

This confluence of megatrends will unleash an era of Workforce 4.0 – an era where intelligent machines, driven by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, and augmented reality, will work alongside humans, augmenting some tasks and automating others. This transformation to Workforce 4.0, which has already begun, is occurring along four major dimensions:

### WorkForce 1.0

- Mechanisation of work
- Artisan skills take a backseat; mechanical skills and working efficiency are valued more

### WorkForce 2.0

- Electronic and computers leads to industrial automation
- Work moves from factory floor to the office; office becomes the center of activity within organisations

### WorkForce 3.0

- Connectivity enables workers to connect from anywhere in the world
- Flex schedules and remote work take off

### WorkForce 4.0

- AI, AR, and robotics enable machines to work alongside human workers
- Work is transformed along 5 dimensions -
  1. Enables productive remote workforce
  2. Easy monitoring & training of worker
  3. Enhances efficiency by augmenting labor force
  4. Complete automation of many feild and office tasks
  5. Uberisation of manufacturing labor force

*Future of work: A historical perspective*

## 1. Enabling a productive remote workforce

As workers extensively use tools like Zoom and Slack amid COVID19, they became comfortable with technology. Nevertheless, background noise and poor audio quality continue to interfere with productivity. Next generation tools like Krisp, which uses deep neural networks (DNNs) to enable noise cancellation, and Google Duo, an online audio/video conferencing tool that uses generative networks to improve audio quality, promise to alleviate these challenges. AI applications like those from Otter (formerly AISense, which has partnered with Zoom) and Reason8 are helping by automatically taking meeting notes and recording meeting minutes.

When it comes to team activities such as brainstorming and workshopping – a primary reason for the existence of office environments – digital tools like Axis Workshops, which allows several dozen workshop participants to engage with each other in real time using their devices, and Mural and Stormboard, which allow team members to whiteboard with digital sticky notes in real time are coming to the rescue.

These tools will not help with tasks such as marketing and sales which depend heavily on emotional input and face-to-face interaction. While such jobs and tasks are not likely to become completely remote for a long time, emerging innovations are starting to make a mark. For example, companies like Beyond Verbal and Emotibot Technologies are using AI to analyse vocal intonations to determine the emotions of a meeting participant, a tool that could be very useful for sales personnel as they transition to phone meetings with prospects rather than face-to-face meetings.

## 2. Monitoring and training the workforce

As many employees operate remotely during the pandemic, monitoring and training employees and managing projects become a critical need. Tools like Trello and Asana assist managers with creating and assigning tasks and tracking them just as they are completed. Time management apps like Timely (offered by Memory) automatically track time spent on various apps – documents, meetings, emails, and web sites. For project managers, Forecast offers a project management software with Auto Schedule – an AI-enabled feature that automatically estimates tasks, assigns and optimises workload across resources, and sets a project delivery date. Solutions like FortressIQ which use computer vision and natural language processing to record and interpret a user's screen and document processes aid work training and process improvement.

Even before the pandemic, monitoring and training workers had been a challenge for on-site workers as well, especially as skilled labour continues to erode. The pandemic brought on a sense of urgency around this issue especially as companies struggled to keep their operations going while ensuring that their workers remained safe from COVID19. AI is being used to analyse data collected via cameras, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth beacons, and wearable devices, and determine if workers are social-distancing or are at risk of infection. These technologies, while not new, are only now finding traction. As workers become comfortable with these technologies, they could also be applied towards monitoring workers. Companies like Re'flekt and Light Guide Systems offer augmented reality (AR) technologies that aid in training and guiding new workers in their tasks.

> **" Monitoring and training workers had been a challenge for on-site workers as well, especially as skilled labour continues to erode. The pandemic brought on a sense of urgency around this issue especially as companies struggled to keep their operations going while ensuring that their workers remained safe from COVID19. "**

## 3.  Upskilling the workforce

Upskilling has seen the greatest technology-enabled transformation in the recent years. Natural language processing (NLP), which can derive insights out of large amounts of text data, is rapidly reaching human performance in a variety of pattern recognition tasks. Many organisations have invested in NLP-driven comprehensive knowledge management systems, such as that offered by Sinequa, that analyse market trends, make company information readily accessible to employees, allow for review of lengthy contracts and patents, and enable seamless collaboration among employees – a boon in this era of social distancing.

On the field, digital twins and IoT sensors are providing workers with rapid and real-time access to operational data while natural language generation (NLG) technologies, such as that offered by Arria NLG, are helping convert operational data to narrative insights and reports. Companies like Augmentir are using NLP to digest checklists and other media related to field work and share insights with frontline workers, analyse steps where workers are facing challenges, and enable workers to enter annotations and feedback on the field in a seamless fashion. Augmented Reality (AR) technologies from companies like Fieldbit, Re'flekt, Scope AR, and Ubimax allow semi-skilled field workers to obtain guidance from skilled technicians in the back office as well as document their work in real-time. While AR has demonstrated efficiency improvements of 25% to 50% in multiple use cases, there are still challenges to consider, including poor connectivity in remote locations, poor performance in noisy factory settings, as well as limited scalability thus posing barriers to adoption.

## 4.  Automating the workforce

While complete automation of the workforce and lights-out manufacturing are still decades away, examples of automation of tasks that require higher levels of intelligence are already starting to appear, thanks to emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, and drones. For example, traditionally, designing new materials and products has involved many months of manual labour. However, emerging technologies such as materials informatics and ingredient informatics are enabling companies to design new materials, nutritional ingredients, and food and beverage products within weeks. Likewise, generative design is allowing companies to optimise product design within a fraction of time that designers have traditionally needed and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) tools from companies like FortressIQ and UiPath are increasingly automating away many of the back-office tasks and processes.

Drones and robots are finding traction in three types of tasks – tasks that require high throughput and are well-defined (such as in microfulfillment centers), tasks that are manually intensive and hard to complete (such as inspecting pipes and storage tanks), and tasks that pose a safety risk to workers (such as inspecting infrastructure in remote areas). Nevertheless, compared to informatics, drones and robots will likely experience slower traction as they are not scalable in all tasks which in turn poses a roadblock to complete automation.

Automation is also finding its way into product development. For example, companies like Emerald Cloud Lab and Strateos offer ready-to-go cloud robotic labs that innovation can tap into to aid their chemistry and biology experiments.

## 5.  Sharing the workforce

For nearly a century, talent and skill have been one of the main competitive barriers for organisations. However, as these skills become embedded in technology platforms that can upskill workers and enhance their efficiency, and as demographic changes erode the skilled workforce, businesses will increasingly depend on a shared workforce of semi-skilled and skilled workers rather than spending resources on retaining talent. Companies like TaskRabbit and Upwork have already Uberised the handy person and the consulting/software workforce. Coresystems is offering an Uber-type crowd-servicing platform for manufacturing companies. While still in early stages, megatrends will ensure that this transition eventually happens.

To summarise, while complete worker automation may be decades away, worker augmentation and upskilling is not that far of considering that emerging technologies such as AI, AR, and NLP that are enabling this transition have reached a tipping point. The ripple of this workforce transformation goes beyond just the employee and the employer; it has implications for where people will live, what they will do with their time, what clothes and technologies they will buy, and what type of education they will value. The time to invest in and understand the implications of Workforce 4.0 is now.
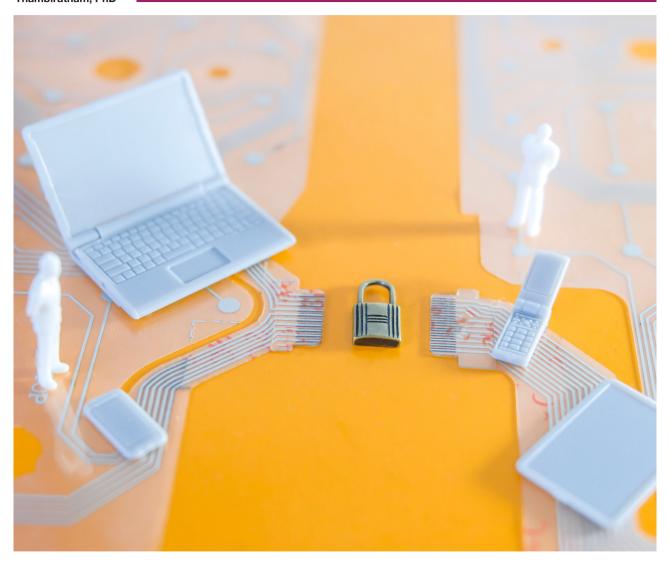
# Cause for Concern: Can Cyber Security Lift Hidden Consequences of the Global Digital Innovation Boom?

**Kavintheran Thambiratnam, PhD**

Kavintheran Thambiratnam has a Ph.D and M.Sc. in Photonics, and a B.Sc (Hons.) degree in Applied Physics from the University of Malaya. He has published numerous research articles, conference proceedings, books and articles in magazines on a variety of topics, and is a strong advocate of research commercialisation and works closely with high technology industries and universities. He is currently attached to the private sector, and focuses on the nurturing and development of technologies for the market.

# 1700s
## Mechanical manufacturing

Steam-powered machines replaced human labor

**1.0**

# 1800s
## Mass production

Electric-powered machines aided the production of goods in massive quatities

**2.0**

# 1900s
## IT automation

IT enabled the use of geographically disparate systems, reducing production cost

**3.0**

# 2000s
## Cyber-physical system use

Technologies like ML/AI enabled automated information sharing and even decision making

**4.0**

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) and the Internet of Things (IoT), the concept of smart cities, where all devices, infrastructure and citizens are seamlessly connected and integrated, is fast becoming a reality.
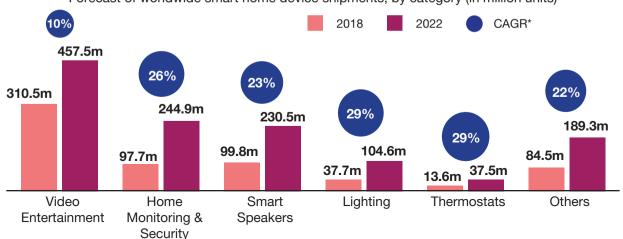
At every level, people are now becoming more and more highly connected to each other while our homes and offices are able to 'talk to' and monitor each through various devices. The internet and digital connectivity are also becoming an integral part of people's lives, with wider internet connection penetration as well as faster systems enabling higher speeds and higher volumes of data sharing and processing.

## Smart Home Technology Poised for Blockbuster Growth
### Forecast of worldwide smart home device shipments, by category (in million units)

Legend: 2018 | 2022 | CAGR*

| Category | 2018 | 2022 | CAGR* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Video Entertainment | 310.5m | 457.5m | 10% |
| Home Monitoring & Security | 97.7m | 244.9m | 26% |
| Smart Speakers | 99.8m | 230.5m | 23% |
| Lighting | 37.7m | 104.6m | 29% |
| Thermostats | 13.6m | 37.5m | 29% |
| Others | 84.5m | 189.3m | 22% |

*\* Compound annual growth rate, i.e. the average annual growth rate for each category between 2018 and 2022*
*Source: IDC*

## Global Connectivity: Saviour or Slave?

The integration of the cyber domain into almost every aspect of modern living has made the Internet an indispensable tool to the functioning of society. Increased internet connection penetration and reach have led to the widespread adoption of mobile and connected devices in both developed and developing countries. This global connection of devices and networks has become the neural network that drives our planet's future, bringing promises of continued advancement to utopia.

But it is this very same network that has become our Achilles' heel. Like all technological tools before it, countries and corporations have become substantially reliant on this new normality, and have inadvertently put themselves at increasing risk of being enslaved by it. The same networks that manage our shipments of food or the production of goods are vulnerable to failure or even being overtaken by hostile parties. When this happens, will we be able to restore order by returning to more

traditional ways? Will digital natives, both young and old, be able to revert to previously conventional ways to survive? Or will we be doomed to witness the not-so-gradual collapse of society as we fail to carry out even the most basic of survival tasks?

While the scenario of total doom and gloom is somewhat unlikely, the unintended consequence of the disruption of these connected networks cannot be denied or 'swept under the rug'. In most cases, the consequences of any disruption to cyber systems, be it malicious or not, have been readily prepared for with numerous measures and countermeasures in place. However, most of these measures and countermeasures address the intended consequence of such disruption, which is the loss of function. Rarely do they address the consequences that are unintended. These unintended consequences are not always immediately evident, and can go unnoticed and unchecked for years, decades even, before its effects are finally felt.

A good example of the effect of unintended consequences could be seen in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. During the tragic events of 9/11, the crash and collapse of the Twin Towers in New York City triggered severe reactions. The most jarring and immediate was the animosity towards a large section of the world, heightened security around the country and the re-direction of substantial portions of the national budget towards security and defense.

What most did not realise at that time is that these actions in turn brought about a series of unintended and unforeseen consequences. From the heightened state of alert established in the United States, a second order impact emerged through the creation of an atmosphere of fear. It also derailed the local and global economy and airline industry for many few years, resulting in significant economic setbacks. From here, a third order impact soon becomes evident through the disruption of the United States by instigating certain degrees of impoverishment, such as the spending of money becoming less efficient at boosting the economy, replacing freedom with control, and creating a loss of social capital worldwide. And finally, a reactive backlash was ingrained in society, with suspicion possibly being permanently embedded in the psyches of most citizens. This in turn influences legislature, business processes, adding layers of safeguards which are costly and inefficient, and the effect being seen even as recently as in the events surrounding the US Capitol in 2021.

## Uncovering the Flip Side of the Digital Revolution

In the aspect of cyber security, more often than not a less direct assault on the target is made. Cyber-criminals often bypass the primary target, which would be highly guarded and protected in the first place, and instead focus on secondary targets with the ultimate goal of weakening and circumventing the defenses put in place.

These secondary targets can encompass a wide range of candidates, from the families of employees, and related business acquaintances to even the vendors and various service providers that support the primary target. These targets are easier to isolate when the crisis is engineered, and therefore exploitable. Using these secondary targets, attackers can then in turn isolate primary targets, which are normally much better protected.

Furthermore, attacks on these targets are really cyber in nature; in this age of social networks, to be isolated, ostracised or excluded from these networks would have some impact on a person's mental health, therefore making them vulnerable as intermediaries towards reaching the primary target. This form of indirect attacks are particularly effective in societies and countries that are used to free speech and the Internet as a tool for voicing opinions. A mere disruption of internet services alone can create a large vacuum akin to censorship and loneliness. This is in addition to denying most common activities such as online shopping and paying e-bills, to checking on their kids and friends via texting from being carried out, adding further disruption. The targets likely to suffer from this sudden and prolonged access denial to the Internet include mainly parents and their teenagers, while older aged groups tend to be more resilient.

Highly vulnerable targets would also include Internet addicts – hardcore gamers, social networkers, entertainment video streamers, and those dependent on the Internet for entertainment or work. What's more concerning, however, are infrastructure and service providers. While critical infrastructure such as energy generation and distribution facilities, utility providers and medical and security service providers may be operating on internal networks and thus less dependent on the Internet, a certain degree of communications, such as emails and other interactions with the outside world might be crippled.

Over the short term, the primary impacts such as the temporary disruption of Internet-based activities becomes immediately felt. Most people will complain about these inconveniences and even show minor irritation, with the general thought that this is a temporary problem that will be fixed. Most people would be clueless as to what is happening, and during this period, they would be vulnerable to those who claim to be in the know of the current situation.

However, the real effect of this disruption will soon become evident, as fixing critically damaged infrastructure – either cyber or physical – would take resources and time. At this point, some segments of society will begin to wonder if this will be permanent. This is also when feelings of fear set in. Individuals will feel a sense of helplessness and in turn begin to panic and act irrationally, allowing this weakness and psychological collapse to easily spread and infect those with whom it comes into close contact, not unlike a virus. This will in turn have longer lasting effects of fear and skepticism being embedded in the minds of the general population. Even if the problem has been fixed, they may assume it is

> " **Organisations should also establish failsafe contingencies to safeguard their employees in the event a cyberattack takes down a firm's ability to carry out financial transactions and pay wages. With so many firms becoming dependent on digital technology, it is advisable to prepare policies and protocols to deal with disruptions in the cyber domain.** "

still unsafe or ready to collapse again. Even with a disruption to cyber services for a few days, fear and survival instincts could kick in. People would become worried about the safety of their banked assets.

Subsequently, with the possibility of access to money being blocked, the hoarding of food and water could take place, leading to civil disturbances and even rioting. If only one city or a particular area within it is affected, national governments can organise relief efforts and provide temporary internet access via satellite or mobile land stations. People with the means to do so can leave the city, though those that decide to remain or who are unable to leave would soon become in danger of falling prey to criminals and conmen seeking to take advantage of the situation. However, if there is still no solution in sight after a while, it is possible that a city's supplies would begin to diminish, possibly encouraging individuals trapped in the city to turn to crime. At this point, it is doubtful that anyone will remain in their jobs or offices, and this is when tertiary effects begin to be seen; the breakdown of order in affected communities, cities or countries.

## Preparation is Key

By realising the extent of damage that can come from a disruption of the cyber domain, we can now prepare, in a way, to counter these consequences. The most crucial point to realise that the point of failure in such a scenario is not the technology, but rather the different reactions that will take place when the cyber domain is disrupted.

One can expect a mix of emotions from positive to negative, and it is the positive emotions that are needed to overcome the negative. As such, it would be critical to identify, train and prepare key persons in an organisation, society or country so that they may become beacons of hope, assurance and emotional support in times of disorder.

Organisations should also establish failsafe contingencies to safeguard their employees in the event a cyberattack takes down a firm's ability to carry out financial transactions and pay wages. With so many firms becoming dependent on digital technology, it is advisable to prepare policies and protocols to deal with disruptions in the cyber domain.

Furthermore, organisations must prepare themselves to deal with the additional fallout of such a disruption, which may include the loss of large amounts of critical data which the company would need to survive.

The sudden loss of digital technology and its capabilities will also cause a ripple effect that would affect the psychological stability of employees. Unprepared employees would not be able to think of reactionary measures at such short notice in the event of an attack or disruption as they might be in a state of shock. Emotions experienced by an individual in this situation would include grief and panic.

So the question now begs to be answered; is your organisation prepared to meet and handle each and every different psychological emergency with confidence? Most are unfortunately not ready to do so.

Here, neuroplasticity is the key to survival. However, not everyone is capable of consciously and rapidly changing their mindsets in an instant. As such new mental models will have to be created, and the necessary training imparted. Early warning systems and resilience building must be made a priority, particularly for senior managers. Core functions and departments within organisations should also be trained to operate as independent cells, thereby delaying and reducing the impact of communications disruptions. This is an essential business continuity plan. Cyber insurance is also a point to consider, as the only thing that is more painful to a company than the loss of its data is the monetary losses that come along with it.

## Continuity and the Way Forward

While the unintended consequences of disruptions in the cyber domain can be far reaching, they are not in any way a death knell to any individual or organisation involved. As with any scenario, preparation and a proper plan of action, while not being able to prevent these consequences, would go a long way towards mitigating their effects and bringing the situation back to normal. As the old saying goes, luck favors the prepared, and proper preparation can make any unintended consequence easy to manage and overcome.

# Collision Or Collaboration? The Impact Of The Generation Z On The New Ways Of Working

**Nadia Sullivan**
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**Overview of the multigenerational workforce**

## GENERATIONS IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

| BABY BOOMERS | GEN-X & XENNIALS | MILLENNIALS | GEN-Z |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Born: 1946-1964** | **Born: 1965-1983** | **Born: 1981-1996** | **Born: 1997 and beyond** |
| Optimistic \| Enjoy mentoring \| Strong work ethic | Independent \| Innovative \| Strong communicators | Tech-savvy \| Collaborative \| Focused on the greater good | Digitally fluent \| Practical \| Flourish in diverse workforce |
| **Shaped by:** The Vietnam War, civil rights movement, Watergate | **Shaped by:** The AIDs epidemic, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dot-com boom | **Shaped by:** Columbine, 9/11, the internet | **Shaped by:** Life after 9/11, the Great Recession, access to technology from a young age |
| **Motivated by:** Company loyalty, teamwork, duty | **Motivated by:** Diversity, work-life balance, their personal-professional interests rather than the company's interests | **Motivated by:** Responsibility, the quality of their manager, unique work experiences | **Motivated by:** Diversity, personalisation, individuality, creativity |
| **Communication style:** Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face to face | **Communication style:** Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face to face | **Communication style:** IMs, texts, and email | **Communication style:** IMs, texts, social media |
| **Worldview:** Achievement comes after paying one's dues; sacrifice for success | **Worldview:** Favouring diversity; quick to move on if their employer fails to meet their needs; resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives | **Worldview:** Seeking challenge, growth, and development; a fun work life and work-life balance; likely to leave an organisation if they don't like change | **Worldview:** Self-identifying as digital device addicts; valuing independence and individuality; preferring to work with millennial managers, innovative coworkers, and new technologies |
| **Employers should:** Provide them with specific goals and deadlines; put them in mentor roles; offer coaching-style feedback | **Employers should:** Give them immediate feedback; provide flexible work arrangements and work-life balance; extend opportunities for personal development | **Employers should:** Get to know them personally; manage by result; be flexible on their schedule and work assignments; provide immediate feedback | **Employers should:** Offer opportunities to work on multiple projects at the same time; provide work-life balance; allow them to be self-directed and independent |

Multigenerational workforce is a term used to describe a situation in which there are multiple generations active and available on the labour market.

For the first time ever in history, today's workforce is the most multigenerational it's ever been. Many employers see this phenomenon as a good opportunity to explore and analyse these generations and understand their different needs, wants and expectations.

*Source: Purdue University Global*

## Unlocking the Value of  Multigenerational Workforce

As a result of a declining mortality rate, improved healthcare, and better quality of life, human life expectancy has risen dramatically. This is even more evident when you consider the fact that global life expectancy is currently averaged at 73 years compared to just 52.5 years in 1960.

Organisations must be aware of the aging workforce, the multigenerational workforces that will be created as a result, and the possibilities and challenges that age diversity in the workforce will bring. The knowledge of how different generations can work together, and the ability to manage their collective differences, will be a critical factor in achieving business success.

There is no one size fits all when it comes to today's workforce. Imagine having four or five generations of people working together in one roof. Five generations mean five working approaches and style. Although there is no standard manual as to which generation should take the lead, people will normally learn to adjust within a multigenerational workforce. A diverse team provides the opportunity for the unique strengths of each team member to be leveraged. The greater the diversity, the greater the breadth of strengths available. Each diverse team member has strengths that can compensate for the shortcomings or blind spots of other team members.

What kinds of challenges are in the horizon for today's employers? How do generational workforce differences affect our ability to manage people effectively? And what are the traits, beliefs, and life experiences that mark each generation, influencing how they work, communicate, and respond to change?

With this information, organisation leaders, especially managers and HR executives, can develop multigenerational strategies in recruitment, orientation, talent management, retention, and succession planning.

## The competitive advantage for having generational diversity

Having a multigenerational workforce can, and should, be a distinct advantage for companies today. The wide range of ideas and knowledge from a broad group of people can serve the company well, and help employees excel in their work.

Employers need a higher level of awareness of the potential benefits and challenges of a multigenerational workforce as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to it. For a start, employers need to take time to understand the different career motivators and aspirations of each generation. Companies that can leverage these differences will be able to bring out the best in their people, build a healthy talent pipeline and ensure sustainable business growth.

Organisations that hire and promote the same kind of thinkers are capping their potential. More perspectives on a team will lead to better decision-making. Perspective diversity can come in many forms: through different backgrounds, personalities, genders, races and ethnicities, experiences, thinking patterns, locations, skills, leadership styles, and ages.

The advantages of having generational diversity in workplace will create innovation and foster robust collaborations, including:

1. **It drives innovation**

   To have an age-diverse team, able to come up with more innovative ideas and solutions. Younger people who have grown up during the Digital Revolution have greater exposure to digitalisation as well as innovation, and are thus more open to embracing new technology and agile ways of working. Mature professionals, on the other hand, can contribute by sharing their specialist knowledge and industry experience with the younger generation, or being a mentor of sorts, and help guide their ideas to achieve practical business objectives. By encouraging such open collaborations, teams are empowered to co-create initiatives that combine past learnings with innovation for greater efficiency.

2. **It builds a healthy talent pipeline**

   Companies that tap into the wide range of knowledge, ideas and unique strengths from each generation will have the distinct advantage of having a future-ready workforce. A strong internal talent pipeline also helps employers reduce hiring costs, so that they can focus their resources on training courses to deepen their employees' capabilities and create more opportunities for internal promotions.

3. **It promotes the sharing of best practices and different perspectives**
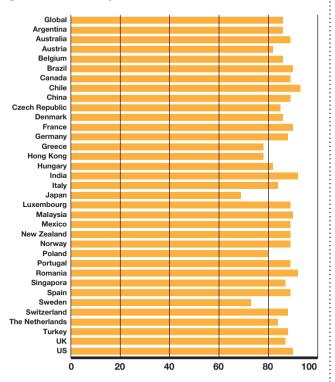
   Experienced professionals are extremely valuable to the business as they have acquired a tremendous wealth of knowledge and skills throughout their career. In particular, they can play an instrumental role in the career development of younger employees by sharing critical knowledge and experience that typically require years to acquire, such as having a strong commercial acumen and the ability to develop effective business management strategies.

There is also an increasing trend of 'reverse mentoring', which means that mature employees are being paired with and mentored by younger staff on technology, social media and current trends.
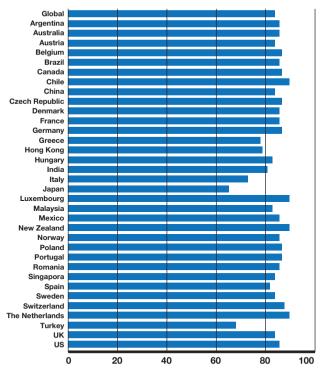
The more people interact with each other in the office, the more they can understand and learn from each other's insights, perspectives and ideas. Companies that foster an engaging environment and communicate their successes of having a collaborative multi-generational workforce are likely to gain a competitive advantage in attracting both young and mature talent.

According to a survey done by Randstad, a specialised and leading organisation in the HR service industry. 90% of the 400 Malaysian employees and job seekers surveyed on the pros and cons of a multigenerational workforce revealed that they are already working in generational diversity. Although the numbers may look good, many employers are still being challenged with managing the dynamics of a multigenerational workforce. Below are results of the survey conducted on the impact of multigenerational workforce.
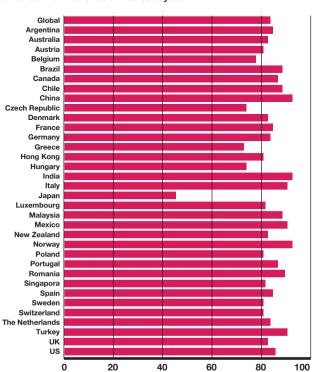
Globally, 86% prefer to work in a multigenerational team while Malaysians says 90% are already adapting with the generational diversity culture.

85% confirmed that they are working in multigenerational teams which saw 10 to 15 years of age gap.
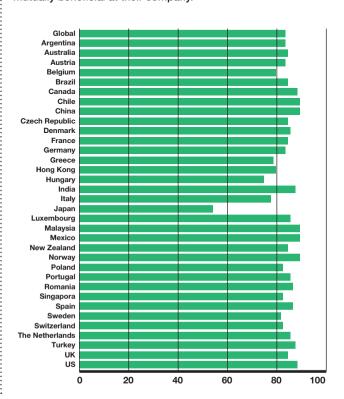
Globally, 85% revealed that they come up with innovative ideas and solutions. Thanks to an age-diverse working team which enables them to create that ecosystem.

85% believe that the collaboration between generations is mutually beneficial at their company.

**80% feels that the main difference with working in a multigenerational workplace is the communication style.**

Global
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Chile
China
Czech Republic
Denmark
France
Germany
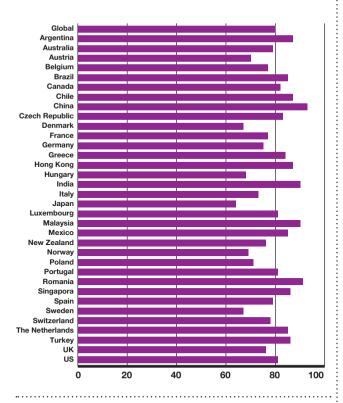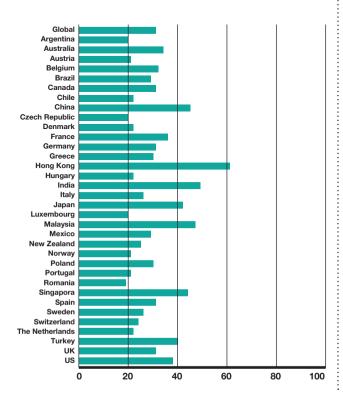Greece
Hong Kong
Hungary
India
Italy
Japan
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Mexico
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Singapora
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The Netherlands
Turkey
UK
US

0    20    40    60    80    100

**31% find it difficult to communicate with co-workers who are not from their generation or in their age group**

Global
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Brazil
Canada
Chile
China
Czech Republic
Denmark
France
Germany
Greece
Hong Kong
Hungary
India
Italy
Japan
Luxembourg
Malaysia
Mexico
New Zealand
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Singapora
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
The Netherlands
Turkey
UK
US

0    20    40    60    80    100

By looking at the survey results, Malaysia scored quite high alongside other emerging and developed counties. Generational diversity shows great potential as people from different generations can grow and learn from one another when exposed to different ideas and experiences. The new perspectives they gain can spark new ideas and prompt new ways of working. This could also be synchronised with the current technology advancements which encourage robust learning and collaboration processes.

Additionally, with the rising cost of living, it is increasingly more expensive to retire early. As a result, the current workforce find it difficult to retire at the same age that previous generations did. The continuous rise in the cost of living also means that members of Gen Z are opting to study longer and enter the workforce at a later stage – a trend that's projected to continue for the next 20 years. The combined impact has implications for employers, who will need to shift existing beliefs and attitudes towards older workers.

## What does it mean for today's working environment? Collison or collaboration?

These changing demographics worldwide are creating a labour market in which five generations coexist. For the first time in history, these generation are working side by side. With more generations in the workforce than ever before, the workplace values and working styles are changing. Understanding this multigenerational workforce and its implications will be essential for driving innovation, creating united and productive teams, and adapting to the future workplace.

Considering the pandemic, older generations' technology habits might look similar. Young and old, people spend more time online now than before the outbreak of COVID19. The workday has grown longer, with more meetings featuring more participants.  Suddenly, older generations use Zoom just like their younger counterparts use FaceTime. Unified collaboration, namely video conferencing, swelled to unimaginable rates — tossing generational differences in technology aside.

It is easy to stereotype the different groups of working generation, for example, the baby boomers may think of Millennials as tech obsessed and lacking with people skills, and for the generation Z, might think baby boomers are stubborn and inflexible. But everyone is unique on its own way, rather than assuming the biasness of the individual, every generation should embrace and accept based on merits by demonstrating a willingness to listen to new ideas, knowledge, and expertise each of the generation possess.

Each generation has its wants and needs and values different ways of working. Older generations often have fewer responsibilities and costs at home, and they appreciate the opportunity to work part-time or reduced hours, so that they can enjoy the benefits and rewards of a lifetime's work. But an increasing number of Generation Xers are part of the "sandwich generation," responsible for caring for both elders and children alongside their work. And for members of Generation Y, a sociable life outside of work is often just as important as their career.

Change is constant in today's world at the forefront of every industry. Companies need to change and constantly improve or else they will be left behind. It is especially important to have team members that are willing to find creative ways to adapt the company to the needs of customers and the market.

With a multigenerational team, organisations are able to pull from all different generational backgrounds to come up with innovative solutions to problems. Adapting policies and practices to meet employees' needs across a spectrum of age and life-stages builds the workforce of the future. Age-diverse teams contribute to greater innovation. They can help address vital questions in dramatically new environments: how teams work together, how a supply chain is managed and how other essential operations are prioritised. Use peoples' ideas to change or improve work, then let employees know that their idea or encourage them to implement it. Offer praise frequently while encouraging praise and recognition among employees, as well as from supervisors.

## Moving forward: Creating collaborative culture

COVID19 has had a significant impact on the workplace. The physical workplace itself has shifted in tremendous way, from a place where work is done, to a place where workers collaborate. As organisations continue to face the ongoing challenges brought about by the pandemic, flexible working is here to stay, and organisations are talking about the fact that their employees can now work from anywhere for the rest of their lives if they want. Organisation in this period of great uncertainty, must consider new ways to ensure business continuity and organisational resilience. A multigenerational workforce, with four or five generations working alongside each other, if not physically, then virtually will helps to meet these challenges.

We all know that work will never be the same, even if we do not yet know all the ways in which it will be different. What we can say with certainty is that the sudden shift to distributed work has provided a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine everything about how we do our jobs and how we run our companies.

As we entered the borderless world, technology, which continued to transform the day-to-day lives of people around the world, had also come to work. While the foundations of digital—mobile, cloud, social media—were established early in the decade, by the middle of the decade this shifted to a world in which technology was viewed as a driver and enabler of every aspect of work. So, the future office environment is going to be interesting. We will no longer come into the office just to sit at our laptops and work. We will come in for a specific purpose, and the majority of that purpose will be socialising, networking and collaboration.

There are some different ways in which workforce collaboration can take place:

1.  **Top-down collaboration**
    Collaborative culture is transparent in nature as it promotes the documenting and sharing of best practices, so that organisation can make the best of everyone's knowledge and expertise. Leaders are more responsive to request and able to provide better feedback since they are more proficient in facilitating collaboration. A collaborative culture values the idea that we are better together. It centres on the idea that collective intelligence drives the most creative solutions.

2.  **Diverse collaboration**
    It takes a diverse team to collaborate effectively to create a strong driver of innovative ideas. Collaboration in the workplace is when two or more people (often groups) work together through idea sharing and thinking to accomplish a common goal. It is simply teamwork taken to a higher level. With the changes and advancements in technology, such as high-speed Internet, web-based programs, file sharing, email and video-conferencing, collaboration has become a more productive way of doing things.

3.  **Technological collaboration**
    Having technology to better facilitate group work both in office and remote help employees today to be more communicative, more collaborative, and more cooperative than ever. Productivity is no longer chained to a physical desk. The office can be anywhere that have an Internet connection, meetings held from the comfort of each employee's home and tasks ticked off on one teamwide, real-time collaborative software suite.

Like many new practices or processes in the workplace, true collaboration must be inculcated and become the default for every employees. A collaborative culture fuels innovation by bringing out the best in employees. When employee feel like they are part of a team effort, they will become more energised, productive, and adaptable. Collaboration creates feelings of community and involvement. It makes them feel happier and less stressed.

In short, collaborative employees are engaged employees. And engaged employees are employees who stick around. Besides employee retention, having a reputation as a collaborative culture can help an organisation when it comes to recruiting top talent.

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# The Value of Technology in Shaping the Future of Work

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Transformation of businesses and organisation typically look at perspective of people, technology, and process. In exploring what technologies can bring values in the future of work, we summaries it into 8 technologies values that could enhance the future of work, workplace, and workforce.

## AUTOMATION

Automation is key in enabling increased work productivity. The value gained here stems from freeing up the workforce from dull and repetitive work. Information overload, deadlines and technological complexity can be things of the past asvalue of automation becomes increasingly important. Automation goes beyond routine manufacturing activities and is now revolutionising work involving knowledge. In light of the pandemics, a contactless or low touch economy must be incorporated into major sectors, allowing automation technology to play a crucial part in order to maintain smooth business operation. At some point, AI-driven robots will inevitably replace many humans at their jobs, and the current pandemic further sped up the process.

## TALENT ACQUISITION

Big Data has a tremendous effect on the hiring process and how businesses treat and interpret data, including using it to analyse potential talents through screening and supporting the decision making process. Technology has not only given rise to the digital workplace, but also to the way companies recruit talent. From hiring across major social media platforms to having algorithms scan resumes and applications, technology is making it easier than ever for companies to find the right employee to fulfil their full-time, part-time, and on-demand positions. Harnessing the power of technology and big data is not only convenient for organisations, but also for individuals. Having direct access to a pool of temp jobs can provide individuals with more flexibility and control over their work life. Zenjob, a German startup, is a good example of how tech is revolutionising hiring for companies as it takes care of all steps in the staffing process including signing contracts, employee insurance, payment and invoicing.

## COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM

In collaborative platforms, employees and contract workers alike are able to get jobs and contribute as a crowd. The greatest successes occur when collaborative behaviour breaks boundaries and structured organisational systems, resulting in the development of ecosystems that are flexible and fluid. This meant that some businesses have been able to respond in the quickest way to changing circumstances. Some organisations have been more transparent with their workforce about critical decisions and some have created new business partnerships. The introduction of mobile technology and cloud-based solutions have certainly helped make the idea of working anytime, anywhere a reality.

## SOCIAL NETWORKING

Social media influencers rely heavily on technology to increase consumers and followers. A decade ago, the influencer marketing arena was limited only to celebrities and a small handful of bloggers. Now, with the rise of social media influencers, leveraging on social networking could mean stronger social impact on consumers as part of their goal towards a good cause. As for the workplace, remote employees who are struggling with loneliness can benefit from digital spaces created for team members to connect virtually, for example over lunch or in a virtual cafe. In this way, technology can help replicate normal social activity and stave off loneliness.

## TRUST & TRANSPARENCY

When it comes to risk, most tech leaders' primary focus has been on the subject of cybersecurity. While cybersecurity will always be a concern, leaders also should focus on business resilience, risks and disruptions of having a combined business-technology strategy—risks whose reach extends beyond traditional IT environments into factories and other workspaces, products, and even customer locations. This is because digitally connected customers will now have access to data through a voluminous set of channels, which obviously needs to besecure and resilient. This can be achieved through integration of security into product design and development. The rise of contactless economy will shift the paradigm of trust from physical to digital. Companies need to fully comprehend the implications on the trust they have built so far with their

stakeholders. If risks are not managed, opportunities arising from contactless economy can very well backfire on the trust the brand has built over the years. For example, an online video-conferencing company that gained widespread success during COVID19 times faced severe privacy and security backlash due to data privacy lapses. It had to take significant steps in its cybersecurity architecture to assure stakeholders. Building enduring relationships will remain vital to a contactless economy.

## REMOTE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

In our post-COVID world, remote working seems to be the norm for many businesses across the world, and it will likely stay that way beyond present times. As useful and collaborative as physical offices can be, businesses are discovering that a remote workforce can perform just as well outside of the four walls they're traditionally used to. Employees enjoy the ability to choose where they work—83 percent of employees, remote or on-site, say that a remote work opportunity would make them feel happier at their job. If you need more evidence as to how remote is beneficial, employee happiness can boost productivity as well; a recent study found that workers are 13 percent more productive when happy in their work environment. As collaborative technology continues to advance, it will become even easier to connect to work from almost anywhere in the world. With the help of video conferencing such as Zoom becoming commonplace, employees will likely choose a remote workstyle over an office set up in the future, whenever possible. In maintaining normalcy, virtual teams and gig employees rely on web-based productivity and collaboration tools to connect them to their jobs, regardless of location, or time of day. And while this may apply more to certain groups, like information workers today, over the next five years these trends are expected to accelerate, incorporating more repetitive process-orientated work that can be augmented or replaced with technologies like AI and robotics.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

It is estimated that in any given week, one in six people of working age experience a common mental health problem like stress, depression or anxiety according to a study by Deloitte in January 2020. There are costs for UK employers too. These now reach up to £45 billion each year and have risen by 16% in the last two years according to the study. Mental health also contributes to 'presenteeism', where people work when they are not at their most productive, and the newer trend of 'leaveism' where employees feel they must work outside of their normal working hours. The use of technology can sometimes make it more difficult to disconnect from work. Gamification technology has proven to be hugely successful at boosting motivation and health in the workplace. Tools and software help businesses improve employee engagement by engaging employees emotionally, rewarding desirable behaviours and inject excitement into their workday. According to the 2020 Mercer Talent Trends Study, only 29% of HR leaders have a health and well-being strategy in place. Poor wellbeing negatively affects motivation and job satisfaction as well as increasing healthcare costs. The idea of applying technology value for mental health and wellbeing is perhaps by reducing 'always-on' culture of work. The use cases of wearable technology have greatly evolved from virtual reality games, and physical fitness trackers, to the more recent creation: mood monitors. Tech start-ups such as Moodbeam, are taking on the challenge of creating wearable devices that capture and monitor emotions in the hope of encouraging openness about mental health amongst individuals, and more specifically, organisations.

| The top three disadvantages of being "always-on" | | The top three advantages | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **28%** | said they couldn't switch off mentally | **17%** | of people mentioned keeping in the loop with what's going on |
| **26%** | experienced interference with family or personal life | **16%** | liked quick responses |
| **20%** | reported mental exhaustion | **13%** | liked flexibility of when and where they work |

*Source : "Type and the always-on culture", A research study from The Myers-Briggs Company*

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# The Changing Nature Of Work & Preparation For Future Generation

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While the world of work is changing, a look back at 2020 will always be remembered as the year the tech boom invaded our lives. In more ways than one, the pandemic has transformed our socio-economic landscape. As digital adoption became further accelerated during these unprecedented times, the future of work is being shaped by global megatrends such as globalisation, climate change and demographic shifts. And for youth, here's what it means. These megatrends could possibly shape or even replace the types of work that are currently available in the job market. Inevitably, the changing nature of work requires new habits and new ways of thinking.

One of the key features of the future of work is the concept of work from anywhere (WFA). However, the concept's adoption before the pandemic was slow. Complacency is often cited as one of the reasons for the lag. The recent pandemic, however, has been a testbed for many "new-normal" practices especially with respect to WFA. To sustain support through this ambiguous interim, employees have been forced to work remotely with schools and universities closed down. The situation has tested the capacity of our digital infrastructure and prompted action by authorities to change their policies and regulations to accommodate new working practices.

In the early days of COVID19, working from home was only intended to be a temporary stop-gap measure. However, businesses and organisations have found that the arrangement actually offers a number of tangible benefits. As travel bans get lifted, working from home has slowly evolved into WFA. What's great about WFH is that it allows employees to control their workspace ambience and elements such as attire, layout and music. WFA meanwhile goes further by eliminating the traditional link between homes and company locations, resulting in greater geographic flexibility. As each

individual employee is most likely to have heterogeneous preferences, the geographical autonomy under the WFA arrangement offers a happy median for employees. While some may prefer low monthly overhead , others may differ and opt for a location's diversity or its cultural amenities. Meanwhile, some may prioritise the feeling of "attachment" by living close to their family members, within the proximity of a strong social network or a religious community. Ultimately, with the freedom given, productivity is expected to rise as employees work in places that make them happy.

## Key features of the future of work and WFA

As routine jobs get slowly replaced by machines and tech diffusion, "newer" jobs created are now more non-routine and cognitive in nature. Future workforce's critical skills need to include "soft" cognitive and socio-behavioural aptitudes as well as the ability to foster adaptability, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork and initiative.

WFA or the "talent of cloud" concept is prevailing as one the features of future work. Potential benefits include savings on office operational expenditure, rental and utilities. Plus, the possibility of hiring the best global talents on a remote basis, to a degree, mitigates complex immigration issues. With productivity gain anticipated to be much higher, employees get to enjoy greater flexibility, and lesser time wasted on commuting for a recalibrated work-life balance. A 2015 study conducted on a Chinese travel agency found that when the agency's call-centre employees were shifted to working from home, their productivity increased by an average of 13%, due to a reduction in break time and sick days combined with a more comfortable working environment. A more recent study initiated in 2012 and concluded in 2019 found a productivity increase of 4.4% when workers shifted from WFH to WFA arrangements. The WFA arrangement could also address the brain drain issue faced by emerging economies, small towns and rural areas. With better digital infrastructure, the WFA may reduce urbanisation trends.

However, possible challenges for WFA arrangements include the disruption of seamless communication which previously took place physically for brainstorming, problem-solving and knowledge sharing as well as data security risks. Socialisation among co-workers may also be interrupted as monitoring performance evaluation and compensation will now need to take place virtually. It may also be harder for businesses and organisations to build a corporate culture when their employees are scattered around the globe.

Among the entities that have successfully adopted the WFA concept before the pandemic is the United States Patent and Trademark Office, or USPTO which launched its WFA program in 2012. Following this, USPTO now requires their employees to spend their first two years at its headquarters in northern Virginia after which they may live anywhere in the continental United States, provided they're willing to pay out of pocket for periodic travel back to headquarters (totaling no more than 12 days a year). Tata Consultancy Services, or TCS, a global IT services company, has announced a plan to be 75% remote by 2025. It started its WFA arrangement based on a 25/25 model where employees will only spend 25% of their working hours at the office, and at no point will the company have more than 25% of workers collocated.

Millennials have been reported to be particularly captivated by the idea of WFA. They are comfortable in being "digital nomads" with the freedom to stay anywhere in the world while being employed. Before the pandemic, some countries like Barbados and Estonia have even created a new type of visa to allow WFA workers to work from their countries.

For a successful implementation of WFA, these values should be upheld:

## Togetherness

In the WFA arrangement, remote workers may be surrounded by families and friends but the introverts may feel isolated and lonely without human interaction at a physical office.

## Trust and Teamwork

The work synergy between members in a team is critical for a smooth and seamless team project execution. Cohesive teams have a high degree of tacit cooperation where shared knowledge and clear understanding between the team members are strong. To achieve tacit cooperation, trust building is critical

## Transparency

Transparency serves as a hedge against dysfunction. Transparency should also be a core value to trust building between employee and employers where feedbacks should be regularly solicited especially to encourage creative and innovative thinking processes.

## Integrity

As workers are no longer working within a protected and secure environment, the handling of confidential information should be carefully threaded while working in an open environment.

## Current state of play in Malaysia's digitalisation

The rate of Malaysian businesses' digital adoption is still considered low, even for traditional ICT technologies ("Industry 3.0"). Even though access to the internet has tripled then between 2010 and 2015, especially for manufacturing firms (from 28 to 88 percent, including 60 percent with fixed broadband) and in states that host export industries, digital technologies have yet to make an impact. It is interesting to note that digital technology adoption by the public and the private sectors in Malaysia is higher than what is expected given Malaysia's level of income per capita. Indonesia and China have also observed the same trend, however, the same trend have not caught on in Vietnam and the Philippines. As of 2016, only 62 percent of business establishments were connected to the internet, 46 percent had fixed broadband (often of low quality) and 28 percent had web presence of some kind, leaving Malaysia far behind other OECD countries. Most of the digital economy is dominated by large businesses and organisations, despite numerous programs introduced by the government to encourage SMEs' digital adoption and innovation. As reported in the latest 2015 manufacturing census data, Malaysian businesses only invested about 0.07 percent of gross manufacturing output in ICT. The lag is believed to be due to infrastructure, entrepreneurship (including skills, finance, regulations and technology-related) and taxation barriers. Additionally, government strategies such as Industry4WRD consistently seek to address issues such as data integrity, standards, sharing and security.

## Challenges and opportunities for the Malaysian workforce

A 2018 School-to-Work Transition Survey (SWTS) conducted by Khazanah Research Institute (KRI) revealed a number of challenges young Malaysian men and women encountered in their transition from school-to-work. The survey also revealed mismatches and popular misconceptions on the relationship between the supply and demand for youth employment. Also, the survey identified features of the labour market that required urgent policy interventions.

Saliently, the SWTS highlighted the soft skills identified as critical by employers. These include strong work ethics, good communication skills, creative and analytical thinking, problem solving skills, teamwork, positive attitudes, and the ability to work under pressure (Fig 1 below). In a world of rapid technological change, the days of setting oneself up for a 'career for life' is over with lifelong learning becoming a norm. Learning agility to reskill, upskill, adapt, innovate and perform through change is vital for the workforce of the future.
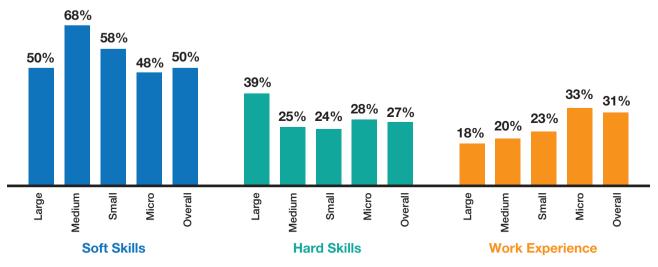


*Fig 1: Future of work: A historical perspective*

## The way forward

Put differently, investing in youth is an essential move to ensure that our youth can thrive in the future of work. This means providing adequate resources, capacity and competent educators to nurture youth the skills they need in areas such as STEM and TVET. Programs should particularly target those most likely to be affected by the digital divide, such as young women and girls, and those with disabilities. While increased investment in STEM is positive, this should not come at the expense of cuts to other subjects deemed less relevant to the employment market.

Funding should not only focus on programs that support learning appropriate skills, but also more generally on education systems, to provide youth with quality and inclusive education to save the "lost" generation, i.e. reduce gaps in educational attainment and promote social mobility to reduce inequality among youth, as well as social cohesion. Additional investments are also needed in skills that cannot be easily learned by machines and would therefore continue to be used by humans in jobs that are at low risk of automation. These skills include creativity, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, management, and complex problem solving. Given that these are the skills that will bring humans added value over robots and machines, it is vital that they are developed among youth, allowing them to be both empowered workers and empowered citizens. For this, a lifelong continuous approach to skills is needed to ensure that youth are able to access training for the skills of tomorrow. Skills of tomorrow may evolve from the skills required in yesteryears and adaptability will provide our youth with the capacity to navigate future changes in the employment market.

Policy makers too, need to take a proactive approach in developing legislation that covers new forms of monitoring and surveillance, ranging from how information is collected to how it is used, as this may not fit into the existing employment legislation. In productivity tracking and privacy, it is now possible for companies to access team data and avoid Orwellian approach of tracking productivity in order to respect employees' rights to privacy. Additionally, data usage policies at organisational level should be established and negotiated with the employees.

Investing in youth's capacity building throughout the lifecycle includes digital skills, skills that give youth a comparative advantage over new technology, creativity and adaptability, and those related to sustainability and preparedness for the impact of Black Swan events such a pandemic or climate change.

In general, Malaysia possesses a good infrastructure base in terms of transport, electricity, water and sanitation. This provides better levels of services than in most Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) in Asia despite some weaknesses, such as the rural road network and urban sewerage facilities. However, a closer look reveals shortcomings in terms of ICT and trade-related infrastructure (e.g. ports, railroads, roads), holding Malaysia behind OECD countries and other high-income comparators such as China. This is illustrated by the evolution of the number of fixed broadband connections per capita and the perceived quality of trade and transport, which have both decreased in Malaysia recently, at a time when countries such as China and Vietnam were quickly catching up.

For WFA to be effective, employers need to let go of the need to micromanage and provide true autonomy to their employees. A study comparing WFH and WFA employees indicate that granting greater autonomy can enhance productivity. However, this is only applicable if the job is independent where workers can perform their tasks and duties with little or no coordination with other co-workers. To nurture trust, leaders can start to restructure deliverables on a day-to-day basis. By breaking down large tasks into bite-sized chunks, it establishes the mutual trust needed such as predictability, repetition and regularity. Without routines, workers, especially the younger generation may feel perpetually on edge. Routines provide the stability needed for remote workers. To enhance teamwork and the sense of belonging, informal sessions like virtual water-cooler meets or online yoga sessions can be arranged. Sike Insights for example uses data on individual communication styles and AI to create Slackbot buddies, while eXp Realty, uses a VR platform called VirBELA to create a place for distant team members to gather in avatar forms. Apart from team synergy and routines, policy amendments are also crucial to create a fitting WFA environment. Currently however, discussions on payment and salary adjustments are still up for debate without a clear guiding principle. In response to this, existing tax, labour and cybersecurity laws may need a refresh to accommodate new ways of WFA arrangements.

## Conclusion

In a nutshell, before we can truly pivot to a remote reality, Malaysia needs to revisit its employment legislation framework. Like so many other things in the COVID19 era, adapting to new forms of work will ensure any changes can be governed holistically. For a better social safety net, the WFA premise and practices need to aligned with future employment trajectories. This will ensure job opportunities remain adequate, fair, up-to-date and fit-for-purpose.

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# Foresight & Futures Thinking Mind Of Work For The Futures

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Futures is an exciting and imaginative tool to navigate the unknown space of possibilities and opportunity that lie ahead of us, at the same time highlighting the potential list. Futures thinking on the other hand is a future oriented mindset that uses systemic method on exploring the alternative futures. In most developing countries, futures thinking is a powerful approach that can help to improve its economic development, social progression, and environmental sustainability. Futures thinking in business contexts provides organisation with a guide to how they might use this method to design to become more resilient especially in this uncertain world. Future thinking at the individual level enables one to plan his or her career paths, professional development and able to meet the demand in future skills.

This article outline 5 important concepts of Futures Thinking in the context of Future of Work.

## Concept 1: Multiple futures of Work

To look into the futures of work, one should consider multiple futures from today. Be able to imagine how futures of work change with different scenarios is important to realise potential and risk of certain career path.



**Forecast Planning**
Planning for ONE Future

**Scenario Planning**
Planning for MULTIPLE Futures

*Source : Futures Thinking GBN*

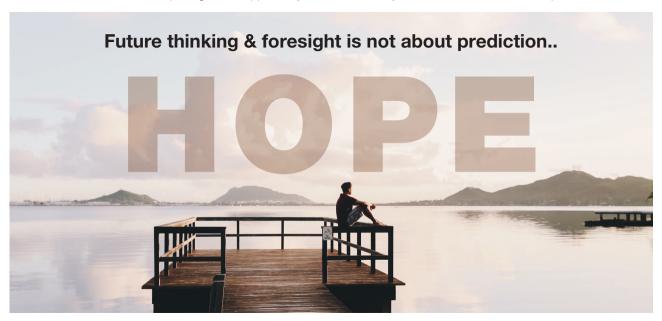| Range of possibilities | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Dimension** | Global | Local | |
| **Skills** | Generalist | Specialist | |
| **Execution** | Online: Professional, crowd-sourcing | Offline: Work on-demand via platform | |
| **Location** | Remotely, anywhere | On-demand | At work station, on-site |
| **Content** | Creative | Repetitive, piecework | Manual |
| **System of Payment** | Output-based related | Hourly of "per drop" | |

The idea of "Beginning with the end of mind" is like self-motivation for achieving career gold and personal life as it provides clear vision of your desired direction and destination.

**Concept 2: Future data and facts does not exist**

# Future is **not necessarily** continuation of the past

What this concept means for the Future of Work, jobs that you are in now are not guaranteed to stay and be relevant forever. The generation before us attend tertiary education and graduated with the intention to work with the same field for as long as possible. However, with rapid changing of technology makes some jobs obsolete, for instance a secretary with good typing skills are now taken over by personal computer and AI. As there is no fact about the future, one should be practice agile and active learning with open mind. Whatever work in the past doesn't mean its work for the future. Exploring others opportunity. This means everyone had their chances and hope of better futures.

What this concept means for the Future of Work is, whatever jobs you are in now, should not be assume here forever for you. The generation before us go to university and get the certificate for lifetime work. However nowadays, the rapid changing of technological make certain technology obsolete. For example, secretary who had better skills in typing work are now had no place find their role become obsolete with the coming technology such as personal computer and AI. As there is no facts set in stone about the future, one should be practice agile and active learning with open mind. Whatever work in the past doesn't mean its work for the future. Exploring others opportunity. This means everyone had their chances and hope of better futures.



**Future thinking & foresight is not about prediction..**

HOPE

## Concept 3: The Future is Based on Assumption & Biasness

Assumption for the future of work and biasness happen especially in recruitment process. Your potential might be hinder by assumption of the past history. Parent of people around us might have play a big influence of future career due to their experience and assumption of the jobs.

The question is what is your assumption for the Future of Work? Challenges the assumption by having alternative scenarios and develop strategy for desired career path.

## Concept 4: Future is about system change

A system consists of three things -a scope of function, parts and relationships. Thus when we look at future of work issues, we need to look at it as a systems. For example, automation of industry doesn't mean we have to automate everything for the sake of economic profit. The idea of moving people out of the work systems means they have to find others job or in the unemployment state for such a long time. At the policy level, it's important to manage and mitigate the unintended consequences of high unemployment rate by strategy such as focusing more on creating jobs instead of retaining jobs by doing more to match workers and jobs, strengthening employment services and investing in reskilling and upskilling.

**Systems thinking is a mindset to think, communicate and learn about systems to make the full patterns clearer, improve and share the understanding of problems and see how to face them effectivelys.**

**Traditional thinking**

**Systems thinking**



Unintended Consequences

## Concept 5: Future is About Making Sense Of & Anticipating Signals

Why do we have to be sensitive with the signal of change? It is to make sure we remain relevant at our jobs and do something about it. While we might not doing this on daily basis, once in a while we must ask ourself whether jobs that we are doing now will discontinue or change. For example, we can make sense of the trends in the transportation industry which are moving toward autonomous, connected, electric and shared vehicles (ACES). In this example, as a taxi driver, they need to move toward ride hailing services. Making sense and anticipate action is how we can survive in rapid changing of future of work. As Abraham Lincoln famously quote "the best way to predict the future is to create it".

50% of all employees will need reskilling by 2025, as adoption of technology increases, according the the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report. For example, by looking at the trends in skills needed for 2025, we can make sense and prepare ourselves for active learning and staying relevant.

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# MALAYSIA :
## YAY OR NAY FOR REMOTE WORKING?

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This infographic is an excerpt from the full report **Remote Work Readiness Index,** *Survey conducted by Kantar on behalf of Dell Technologies, January 2021.* More than 7,000 individuals across the APJ region (of which 1,030 were from Malaysia) completed the survey. All were full-time working professionals aged 18 years and above who were and/or have been working from home to some degree throughout their respective national COVID19 control measures. Demographic information captured included age, gender and organisational size. Here are 5 key findings of the survey that reflects how we as a nation tackle remote work challenges and also provide basic understanding for us moving forward.

## Employees in Malaysia feel prepared to work remotely for the long term.

**7 in 10** Malaysian employees had worked remotely before the Movement Control Order (MCO)

Remote working is not new to employees in Malaysia, with **70%** having worked remotely to some degree before MCO measures were implemented.

On average, Malaysian employees worked remotely at least **3.5 days a month** before MCO.

## Gen Z - 91%

More than nine in 10 Gen Z employees had worked remotely before MCO –the highest across all age segments. The average GenZ also spent more days a month working remotely.

### (at least 4.4 days/month)

## Gen X - 36%

Gen X employees constitute the largest percentage of those who had not worked remotely before MCO.

## Employees are concerned about job security and the stability of their remote network in a long-term remote work arrangement.

*When thinking about remote work in the long term, employees are worried about job security from the lack of interaction with their employer, the stability of their remote network, including internet bandwidth, and the blurring boundaries between professional and personal lives.*

## Employees feel that their employer can do more to provide technology and HR-related resources.
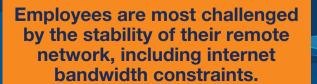
*Only half* **50%** *feel that their employer is doing everything they can to provide the necessary technology resources to enable remote work;*

*even fewer* **43%** *feel that their employer is doing everything they can to provide the necessary HR resources.*

## Employees are most challenged by the stability of their remote network, including internet bandwidth constraints.

**Stable remote networks, productivity equipment/tools and access to internal company resources are the most important factors for employees during remote working**

**48%** Almost half of surveyed employees rate stability of their remote network, including Internet bandwidth, as the most important factor during remote working. This is also consistently ranked in the top three most important factors across all age groups.

More female **40%** than male **33%** employees prioritise fixed working hours and personal time.

Gen Z **41%** and Millennials **40%** also value fixed working hours and personal time more than any other age groups.

Gen Z employees constitute the largest percentage of those who value productivity equipment/tools, with more than half

**53%** scoring this as the top factor

**32%** They also constitute the largest percentage of those who prioritise conducive remote work setup or environment.

**41%** Baby Boomers constitute the largest percentage of those who value support from team managers to ensure a seamless experience during remote working.

## Employees feel that having best practice training and learning and development sessions are important for long-term remote work.

**Lack of in-person communication is the top HR challenge faced by employees while working remotely**

Generally, the top three HR challenges faced by employees while working remotely during MCO are

**1** Lack of in-person communication **47%**

**2** Lack of best practice training for remote working **38%**
learning and development sessions, including training for virtual tools **38%**

**3** Lack of team engagement initiatives **37%**
and access to digital tools for performance review, leave filing, etc. **37%**

**59%** Significantly more Gen Z employees agree that the lack of in-person communication is a challenge while working remotely.

**50%** Baby Boomers find the lack of team engagement initiatives
**46%** and learning and development sessions especially challenging compared to other age groups.

**42%** More Gen X employees find the lack of access to digital tools for performance review, leave filing, etc. to be a challenge.

*Full report available at: https://www.delltechnologies.com/en-my/remote-work/index.htm*

# Supercharge Your Remote Working Productivity:
# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WFA EFFICIENTLY

**Nur Amira Muhammad**
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Working from Anywhere (WFA) is a popular trend riding on the coattails of the flexible work movement. In view of these unprecedented times resulting from the global pandemic, organisations are now offering employees the choice to work when, how, and where they want. WFA could entail working part-time in an office setting, working completely remotely, or a combination of the two.

With WFA being established the new normal in the wake of COVID19, here's a handy guide on how to manage your transition to WFA as efficiently as painlessly as possible.

## Dress Like You're at Work

And that means getting up, hopping into the shower and putting on clean and presentable clothes as if you're at work in a physical office. This would help tremendously in boosting WFA productivity.

## Boundaries Are Your New Best Friend

Adjusting to your WFA takes time and discipline. Let your friends and family know so that you can easily manage boundaries and stick to a schedule with minimal disruptions.

## Keep Regular Work Hours

Create a regular working schedule during designated work hours. Allow yourself some flexibility but do remember to clock off once working hours are done.

## The Best Spot For Work

Establish your own designated workspace and make it as comfortable as possible to increase productivity and reduce work-related joint aches. Tip: invest in ergonomic furniture, it'll save you trips to the doctor.

## Plan Your Workflow and Get on The Same Page – Manage Expectations

One surefire way to keep productivity up is to get smart about planning your work day. Set your priorities and time needed for each task so that you can gauge your efficiency at the end of each day. WFA is a learning process, improvements will come as you progress.

- Does your employer require a nine-to-five schedule, or is there flexibility (i.e. start working earlier and finish earlier, take some longer breaks during the day, etc)?
- Ensure that you and your manager agree on what can be accomplished from home.
- Ask your manager what your priorities should be.
- Discuss how tasks will get done. How will projects be submitted?
- How are teams going to track projects?
- How will they meet to discuss things?

## Break up the Day

No one expects you to work 9-5 without breaks and WFA is no different. Be sure to take breaks, walk outside for a breath of fresh air or do some light exercise to get blood flowing.

## Stay in the Loop

Even without the social aspects of going out for lunch with your colleagues during WFA, it pays to stay connected with each other to create strong camaraderie which will definitely help to boost morale and productivity.

## Hygiene Comes First

Keeping your workspace clean is a good productivity and health boost. Being orderly helps you stay focused and helps get work done faster if you know where everything is.

## Seek your own inspiration

Load up your favourite Spotify music list with some lo-fi beats or calming music to help you work more productively. Or try white noise from the TV if it helps, as long as it is not a distraction.

## Boost connectivity with video calls

It's an extra reason to motivate you to take that shower and dress properly even when working from anywhere:

- Everyone knows who's talking
- Fewer accidental interruptions
- Builds rapport
- Helps you spot social cues
- Encourages team members to stay focused.

## Conclusion

The freedom to WFA is yours, why not make the most of it by working from anywhere you've always wanted to?

Be creative. Be bold. Break rules just to attain that extra notch of productivity. As long as work gets done, it shouldn't matter if you were working from a tree house or from a sunny spot in your garden. Go forth and be productive!

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# KISAH
# Futures
## COMPETITION

# CONGRATULATIONS!

**These are among the consolation winners who have been selected from this competition.**

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

**KISAH Futures** COMPETITION

## AUTHOR
# ANDREW SIAH WEI TUNG
### Speaks too little

# IF ONLY

She is at a lost for ideas. It's 2:09 p.m., and Geeta's been scrolling her phone, looking for a jot of inspiration for the next 'viral piece.' Having been in the world of journalism for half a decade, Geeta knows how to what works. But she also knows that 'virality' cannot be systematised nor predicted. Her editor insists otherwise, often quoting Maugham: "I write only when inspiration strikes, fortunately, it strikes every morning at nine o'clock sharp." Geeta agrees, albeit her body's reluctance. But she's good at her craft, being the writer of "7 types of TikTok meme" and "What Kind of a Roti are you?". Her mother was a Roti Bomb, maybe due to her knack for over-indulging on food.

Maybe chicken rice would help, Geeta wonders as her tummy growls as if on cue. Checking her purse for the necessary items before rising - remembering the mask as she leaves. Wearing a mask is now a social norm. Everyone knows someone close who was down with Covid. Everyone is traumatised, and going out 'bare-faced' now invokes the same effect as public indecency. Just last week, a man was refused entry to the MRT. "7 Types of Maskers". A jolt of inspiration descends on her, and she swiftly jots it down for later reference.

As she walks off into the scorching sun, an instant regret for wearing a fleece top sweeps over her. The pandemic caused an exponential increase in demand for micro-logistics, resulting in a steep rise in carbon emission. Its impact has caused temperatures to rise ever since. Malaysia has always been notorious for its heat and humidity. Still, Geeta used to be able to enjoy the cooling breeze after a heavy rain pour. Now, the air is continuously warm. Heavy. Suffocating. Then again, her mother taught her to always appear presentable. "Always put your best foot forward," she'd say. Geeta wonders if it's worth the sweat.

Maybe an apple pie after, she thinks to herself. How typical for a Malaysian to think about other food while getting food, she chuckles at the thought when reaching the shop. "Aunty Lee, roast chicken rice one take away. Thank you." The vendor nods, sweat glistening off her wrinkling forehead. Geeta feels for her, the humid air she must be feeling beneath her mask. She's one of the last few small vendors that remain. The pandemic lockdown limited everyone to food delivery services, causing restaurant chains to easily outcompete micro-vendors. Many couldn't even survive a month. Now, Geeta tries her best to eat here whenever she can, glancing at the empty tables within. "5 Underrated Food Stalls in Klang Valley Everyone Should Visit", she jots down.

"That'll be four-fifty." Geeta looks up as her food is handed to her. Reaching into her purse before remembering that cash is now a thing of the past. She opens her e-payment app and scans the QR code at the counter, thumbs instinctively typing in her PIN. Fierce advocacy arose to phase out banknotes as it helped in preventing the spread of viral diseases. She even wrote a piece on it, titled "4 Reasons Money is a Relic of the Past". Her mother disagreed, believing that the sudden transition had negative impacts on the poor and the illiterate. Even her mother, a local graduate in the 80s, needed time to familiarize herself with new technologies. Then again, in times of global panic, changes happen almost instantly.

"Thank you ah Aunty, you take care, okay," Geeta smiles before turning to leave. She reciprocates with a slight squint at the corner of her eyes. Geeta wonders what's on her mind and whether she's coping with her life well. Remembering her mother's lesson of 'Sonder,' the word for realizing that everyone's life is as brilliant and intricate as ours. Her mother must know; she always lingered and chatted with everyone when she brought Geeta along for Pasar Pagi. She misses those trips. If only she's still here now. If only the pandemic didn't happen. If only she wasn't one of the unfortunate 2%. 'If only,' she chokes.

## AUTHOR
# BERNARD MANICKAM
### Bright, with a dark side

**KISAH Futures COMPETITION**

# OBSOLETE

"You are paid to tell me what's going obsolete in the future, so do your job!"

Ben sat in front of his screen as his boss shuts the video call. On the side, he received a text message. "He thinks you're losing your touch, you doing okay?" Ben ignored it.

He grabbed his notebook; it had a black hard case with the words "OBSOLETE" debossed on it. What made it ominous was the frantic strikethroughs on the word, like someone was trying to carve it out.

Flipping through the pages, a few handwritten headlines could be seen.

Dec 2019 – COVID19 strikes; travelling will go obsolete.

Aug 2020 – People underestimates the pandemic; freedom will go obsolete

July 2022 – Life is confined indoors; outdoor entertainment will go obsolete.

Ben reaches the latest page. Though it wasn't his first time reading what he wrote, his hands still shivered till he tossed the book aside. He gazed around his studio apartment. "Nothing but these 4 walls again." He thought to himself.

Ben skipped rope to distract himself. With every swing, he spun the rope faster. The word "obsolete" flashed violently within his mind causing him to stop abruptly; kneeling on all fours to catch his breath. Sweat poured down his cheeks.

It was noon, Ben made some spaghetti for lunch. But instead of eating it, he just kept rolling the fork in his bowl. He couldn't take his eyes off his desktop. "Is that... us?" He asked himself.

To alleviate the stress, Ben tried to watch a film. He liked romantic comedies because of its idealistic view of love and life. The genre used to give his mind a break. But now, it was just a painful reminder of what it felt like to go out and meet people.

Truth be told, the television didn't help much because Ben's mind was spiralling, only thinking of the word "Obsolete" over and over again. Ever since he wrote that latest entry, he couldn't take his mind off it.

Finally, Ben stood up and got dressed. He donned a black hooded jacket and paused at the mirror, taking a moment for himself. Slowly and reluctantly, he placed the hoodie over his head and wore a facemask. He left the apartment with the notebook.

Ben brisk walked through the deserted city to an upscale apartment and rang its doorbell. From behind the door came

his boss, "What are you doing here? We're under quarantine!" The boss said angrily. Ben ignored his question and shoved the notebook into his boss's chest. "The truth is the scariest when you get to watch as it happens." Uttered Ben before he left.

Not knowing what Ben meant, the boss just slammed the door shut. He dropped the book at his desk and lighted a cigarette, shifting his attention to admire the sunset view from his sky deck office. Eventually, he opened the notebook and leaned in for a closer look at the latest entry. His eyes went wide.

The headline read:

Sept 2024 – We're becoming computers; human routines will soon be OBSOLETE.

He couldn't understand what he was seeing and decided to read on.

I can't see things the same way. Not anymore.

Everything I do makes me more like... it.

We see these 4 walls as our homes, but it's no different than the 4 walls of a computer case.

When we wake up in the morning, it's no different than waking our devices up.

Training to stay fit is no different than system maintenance.

Eating meals is no different than recharging batteries.

Taking time off is no different than cooling down to avoid overheating.

Wearing masks to leave our homes is no different than protecting our online identities via virtual private networks.

We were obsessed with improving computers, but we never realised we're becoming the computers.

The future of work sees an inseparable integration of computers into our lives.

Eventually, this will render everything you know about being human – OBSOLETE.

Everything slowed down in the boss's mind. A cigarette ash fell and seared his hand. But he was in a complete state of disbelief to notice. The 4 walls of his office closed in on him as he placed the book down. He emotionlessly looked out at the sky like the others, all stuck in their "cases", feeling... obsolete.

**PENULIS**

## ASRIZAM ESAM

Pegawai Penyelidik, Universiti Putra Malaysia

# VIRUS LEGENDA

Harini aku tidak perlu tergopoh-gopoh seperti selalu, seiring suasana redup awan hitam nipis mendamai pagi langit Batu Pahat ini. Barang yang teridam sejak berminggu lalu telah tersemat di dakapan. Buah beri popolo Hawaii ini pasti akan melengkapkan ubat pemvaksin aku kali ini. Sireh Cina yang telah lama tidak dipandang, kini pasti akan melonjak harganya nanti. Khasiatnya dari dulu telah diketahui namun modenisasi telah menenggelamkanmu. Mujur kaedah dekoponik masih memeliharamu dari wajah kepupusan.

Sekotak uncang putih terletak kemas di jendela tepi. Walaupun jendela di tingkat 7, tidak gusar hatiku andai uncang ini terjatuh dari bibir jendela, terjerepok jatuh ke bawah. Ruangan tempat barang hantaran ini tidakkan pernah culas dalam memastikan setiap barangku selamat diterima. Terima kasih buat dedikasi drone Postolaju, walau beribu kali aduanku sampai ke cakera pemprosesan indukmu, namun setelah itu, kau mampu berkhidmat dengan lebih laju.

Aku harap drone itu, tak terlepas lalu terowong penyahvaksin sebelum ianya memegang uncang hantaranku. Mujur Dato Bandar Batu Pahat lebih cepat menjerkah Ketua Majlis Bandaran Parit Sulong untuk memperbaiki terowong vaksin yang rosak ditimpa serpihan drone yang meletup hujung minggu lalu. Kalau tidak, habis semua drone menuju ke Separap tidak ternyahcemar, takut mengundang bahaya yang lain pula nanti.

Uncang yang berkatup kalis api ini segera kubuka. Terujanya aku melihat beri popolo idaman sejak 2 minggu dahulu. Segera kucapai kit PCR kecil ini untuk aku gabungkan dengan ekstrak sireh Cina, ekstrak sel kulit popolo serta ramuan herba alami ku sendiri. Apakah hasilnya seperti yang aku harapkan setelah 70% nigella sativa dicerakinkan di dalam kit vaksin ini? Tak sabar rasanya untuk aku uji vaksin ini. Sudah berbulan aku mencari penawar bagi virus ini, bermacam ubat dari sinseh timur ke farmasi barat telah aku telusuri, namun hasil yang dicari masih belum ditemui. Akhirnya detik yang kutunggu telah tiba, formula herba ini telah dapat aku sempurnakan. Lantas tanpa lengah segera aku suntik vaksin herba ini pada leher di bawah telinga kanan. Segera kuusap usai suntikan, buat rasa lega pada kulit yang semakin nipis. Kulit yang telah tua barangkali, lebih manja kukira. Vaksin herba ini pasti tiada mudarat, kiraku.

Jam seakan berlalu perlahan, 10 minit telah berlalu menambah resah dan gelisah. Vaksin herba ini menjadikah? Andai ada kesan sampingannya, maka 20 minit lagi akan terasa kesan kesengsaraannya. Adakah ini vaksin untuk mengubat atau herba yang semakin menyegat. Tak henti tolol otakku memikirkannya.

Suhu bilik ni memang serasi sama mengikut aturan, tidak sia-sia Dato Penghulu Separap yang beria-ia benar memasang jaring anti-haba keliling bandar sejak 5 tahun dahulu dalam memerangi pendingin hawa hibrid yang kononnya tidak merosakkan ozon itu. Apa kapitalis itu fikir warga Separap ini tidak berotak. Percaya bulat-bulat dengan idea pemasaran kolot penjual pendingin hawa murahan itu. Mujur juga idea jaring anti-haba itu berjaya. Jimat juga duit bulananku dan yang paling penting suhu bilik ini akan memastikan ekstrak herba ini bergabung jalin dengan sempurna.

Kuimbau sebulan yang lalu, akibat daripada virus ini, seluruh badan menggeletar kesejukan. Kaki menjadi lemah tidak seperti selalu yang sentiasa ligat mengukur koridor itu. Hilang semangat ini sama seperti hilangnya upaya kaki ini. Aduhai apalah lagi, ujian-Mu Tuhan, baharu tamat serangan virus Catovid 204, kira-kira 3 tahun lalu, kini telah munculkah virus yang baharu. Adakah virus ini bermutasi setelah sekian lama memeram diri menjadi parasit dalam perumah tumpangan. Mengapakah tiba-tiba kini kau muncul kembali. Tidakku terduga, basah menitis air mataku diluar sedar dalam aku mengelamun sepi. Segera aku katupkan pintu jendela agar tak terlalu dingin dek angin yang tiba-tiba kuat menampar pipi.

Lima belas minit telah berlalu, tanda-tanda kesan ubat ini mula kelihatan. Dan akhirnya, alhamdullilah! Aku bersyukur tidak terhingga. Hilang sengsara sebulan lamanya. Andai tidak berlaku kisah wabak COVID19 virus legenda mengganas di Malaysia tanggal 2020 dahulu, pasti vaksin herba yang kesekian kalinya ini, tidak akan aku temui untukmu Mimit kesayanganku. Sabar ya Mimit, vaksin kucing ini pasti berkesan untukmu. Andai keazaman kuat melangkah, pastikan kudrat menongkat izzah.

Paparan peranti hubung masih menunjukkan tanggal 31 Oktober 2049 jam dua belas tengah hari. Lega aku, hari ini aku berjalan tanpa gopoh-gopoh sepertimana sejak 2 bulan yang lalu. Hatiku tenang, dan syukur dengan kehendakMu Ya Tuhan. Kibaran grafik merah biru dari laser pemancar di awan itu, pasti membuat aku tenang dan kan senantiasa tersemat lambang negeri yang kekal di hati pada pagi Jumaat ini.

### PENULIS
# HAZLINA BINTI IBNI HASHIM
Never give up

**KISAH Futures COMPETITION**

# NOSTALGIA 2020

Aku Rayyan, kini aku berusia 15 tahun dan hanya menjalani kehidupanku dalam rumah di Taman Cheras.

Pada tahun 2040 ini, manusia tidak lagi bersosial secara fizikal, berhubung dan bersosial secara maya sudah menjadi norma kehidupan masyarakat bumi sejak pandemik COVID19 menyerang 20 tahun yang lalu yang mengakibatkan berjuta-juta nyawa terkorban.

2020 merupakan tahun bersejarah yang mengubah struktur sosial masyarakat bumi akibat penularan wabak coronavirus.

Walaupun peratusan penularan tidak setinggi 20 tahun yang lalu. Namun, saki-baki virus masih tersisa. Terdapat manusia yang dalam darahnya sudah sebati dengan COVID19 dan diasingkan dalam bilik yang direka khas oleh kerajaan.

Homeschooling, work from home dan kelas atas talian telah dikuatkuasakan dan diilaksanakan sejak 10 tahun yang lalu di setiap benua muka bumi, termasuk Malaysia. Kanak-kanak yang lahir selepas tahun 2020 tidak pernah menjejakkan kaki ke tanah, tidak pernah merasa riangnya berlari-lari diluar rumah.

Hanya Alrobot yang berlegar-legar diluar menjalankan tugas seharian yang biasa dilakukan manusia. Pada zaman ini, Alrobot menjadi keperluan bagi setiap isi rumah selepas revolusi perindustrian 5.0. Perkembangan teknologi 5G membantu kehidupan seharian umat manusia.

"Rayyan," ibuku memanggil sambil mengetuk pintu kamarku. Lamunanku terhenti, aku melihat jam digital di sisi katilku. 8.00 a.m., aku bingkas bangun dari katil dan membuka pintu kamarku.

"Selamat pagi!" ibu menyapaku sambil tersenyum manis di hadapan pintu. "Lepas mandi turun bawah sayang, kita sarapan sama-sama," sambung ibuku setelah melihat aku terkebil-kebil seperti baru bangun tidur.

Seperti biasa ibu tidak pernah gagal mengejutkanku jam 8.00 a.m setiap hari. Kelasku bermula jam 9.00 a.m, Isnin hingga Jumaat. Ayah dan abangku pula akan masuk pejabat maya 8.30 a.m setiap hari.

Usai makan malam, kami beristirahat di ruangan tamu sambil mengimbau kenangan lama. Sepanjang perbualan, aku hanya mendiamkan diri kerana lebih asyik mendengar dari mencelah kenangan manis mereka menjalani kehidupan normal sebelum penularan wabak COVID19.

Malam itu mataku tidak mahu terlelap. Hatiku berombak-ombak dan dihambat dengan pertanyaan seperti "apa rasanya memijak rumput yang menghijau, melepak bersama rakan-rakan dan menghadiri kelas beramai-ramai". Ingin sahaja aku keluar dan berlari sekencangnya sambil membelah angin malam untuk pergi ke padang rumput.

Aku bangun, perlahan-lahan membuka langkah untuk ke pintu utama. Ketika membuka pintu, aku melihat Alrobot pihak berkuasa berlegar-legar memantau persekitaran taman perumahan Cheras. Melihat kelibat robot-robot tersebut hasratku terbantut.

"Jika tertangkap aku tidak dapat berjumpa ahli keluargaku lagi." Robot pihak berkuasa akan menangkap sesiapa sahaja dan diasingkan dalam tempoh yang lama untuk memberi pengajaran kepada penduduk yang melanggar arahan kerajaan persekutuan.

Mengikut cerita-cerita yang aku baca di laman sosial, sesiapa sahaja yang tertangkap oleh robot pihak berkuasa ada kemungkinan tidak kembali ke pangkuan keluarganya. Aku mematahkan hasratku dan menutup pintu kembali.

Aku kembali ke katilku dan berusaha untuk melelapkan mata. Namun, gagal! Aku bangkit lalu berjalan ke arah bilik abangku. Aku mempunyai dua abang, Irfan dan Muslim. Muslim telah terkorban dek COVID19. Aku membuka pintu bilik Along selepas melihat cahaya dari bawah pintu biliknya. Ternyata dia masih bangun.

"Along, sambunglah cerita tadi," kataku sambil duduk di hujung katilnya.

Along tersenyum sambil memandangku. Kerana berasa kasihan kepadaku dia turutkan juga kemahuanku yang tidak pernah menjejakkan kaki keluar rumah sejak dilahirkan ke muka bumi ini. Pernah juga dia cuba membeli rumput rumah atas talian tapi tidak mampu, harga rumput pada ketika ini mahal.

Along mula membuka bicara, aku menghayati setiap butir bicaranya, mengamati setiap perasaan yang dia sampaikan zaman kanak-kanaknya. Keasyikan bermain bersama teman-teman di halaman rumah, melepak bersama kawan selepas waktu sekolah. Aku cuba dalami dalam fikiranku walaupun terbatas. Aku hanya mampu membayangkan. Pedihnya hati bila kita gagal mengecapi perasaan sebenar.

Malam itu aku tidur bersama linangan air mata kerana berasa rugi lahir selepas pandemik COVID19.

Tut..tut..tut!! bunyi alarm mengejutkanku.

Aku tersentap! Lalu terbangun dari mimpiku dalam keadaan berpeluh-peluh. Mimpi yang aku alami seperti realiti yang sukar diungkapkan. Tidak ingin dan tidak akanku menjalani kehidupan seperti itu. Hanya membesar dalam rumah tanpa menjalani kehidupan di luar, di atas muka bumi tuhan yang luas ini.

Aku menungkup mukaku dengan kedua-belah tapak tanganku sambil mengucap panjang. Tiba-tiba aku merasa seram-sejuk, aku bingkas bangun dan meluru keluar rumah sambil melihat sekeliling rumahku.

Aku tersenyum, gembira melihat anak-anak jiranku leka bermain di hadapan rumah. Ternyata mimpi cuma mimpi. Kini, Malaysia telah bebas merdeka, setiap ceruk benua di muka bumi telah bebas dan merdeka dari pandemik COVID19 setelah vaksin berjaya ditemukan oleh saintis muda dari negara India.
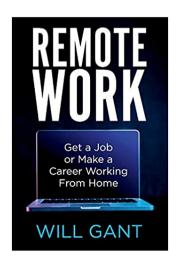
# MyForesight® Book Club



**ISBN-10:**     099908142X
**ISBN-13:**     978-0999081426
**Author:**       Will Gant
**Publisher:**    SIMPLE PROGRAMMER (6 Oct. 2020)

## Remote Work
## Get a Job or Make a Career Working from Home

The comprehensive guide to remote work, working remotely and securing a lifestyle of freedom and flexibility...

Want to work from your home office instead of an oppressive cubicle? Do you dream of traveling the world as a digital nomad? Want to avoid the many mistakes first time remote workers encounter?

Now you can with this book...

Just like you, Will Gant dreamt of working remotely. He wanted to roll out of bed and work whatever hours he wanted. He's achieved these goals and joined the ranks of dependable remote workers.

Now he wants to share his trade secrets with you...

Will Gant is a proven author, software developer and professional consultant. With over 20 years of experience in a variety of roles, he continues to share his expertise in remote work and software development.

Working remotely and living a balanced lifestyle is highly sought after. You get to avoid the long and annoying commutes. You can save thousands of dollars each year working from home. You can also maximize your productivity in a less distracting environment.

If that's what you are looking for, then this book is for you.

You'll learn exactly how to get a remote working job, how to master working remotely, how to persuade your boss to allow you to work from home, how to successfully transition into working remotely, how to avoid the same mistakes Will made when he started out and much more.



**ISBN-10:**     1799841596
**ISBN-13:**     9781799841593
**Author:**       Yvette Blount & Marianne Gloet
**Publisher:**    Business Science Reference, 2020

## Anywhere Working and the Future of Work

While the current workforce has pushed for the capability to work from home, it has been the natural disasters and pandemics that have emerged across the globe this past year that have pushed the matter to the forefront of conversation. More companies are seeing the benefits of having a workforce that can maintain business processes and keep organisations running from anywhere. Advances in technology continue to improve online collaboration tools and co-working centers, making working from anywhere a possibility.

**Anywhere Working and the Future of Work** is a pivotal reference source that provides vital research on the current state of teleworking/telecommuting and how it can be used to achieve competitive advantage. While highlighting topics such as digital workforce, mobile technology, and accessibility, the book examines the trends, issues, and limitations that are informing the future of anywhere working. This publication also explores remote management practices as well as potential challenges such as increasing business automation applications that may require navigation in the future of work. This book is ideally designed for business professionals, managers, executives, government agencies, policymakers, academicians, researchers, and students.

# MyForesight® In The News

## Asia Pacific Futures Network (APFN) Virtual Conference, Regenerating Asia 2050

***Virtual Conference, Philippines***
***19th - 21st November 2020***



In light of the global pandemic, 2020 Asia Pacific Futures Network (APFN), Virtual Conference, Regenerating Asia 2050 was organised virtually last year. The programme was held to explore Asian perspectives surrounding futures studies, explore emerging issues that might likely challenge current trajectories, and spread foresight by building stronger links with other future-focused institutions and organisations worldwide.

During the Special Session – "Why Foresight Matters for Policy Makers", Mr. Rushdi Abdul Rahim introduced the use of MIGHT F.I.R.S.T™ Matrix in assisting policy makers managing information, data and knowledge in a more structured manner.

## Skills for the Future of Work

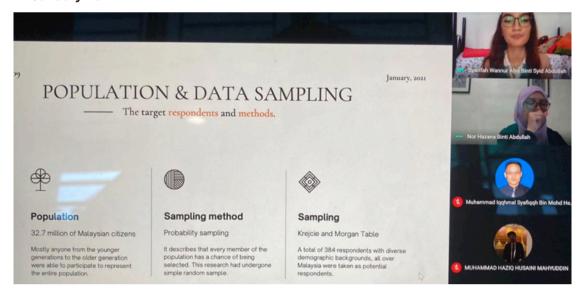***Google Meet, UiTM***
***15th December 2020***



Mr. Rushdi @ myForesight® hosted the event as a Speaker in Session: Professional Leadership Series 2: "Skills for the Future of Work" through Google Meet on 15th December 2020 with participants from UiTM's Faculty of Business and Management. Significantly, the programme seeks to reveal current trends shaping the future, emerging technologies, future skills and ideas for the global workforce as well as policy makers to move forward with.

# MyForesight® In The News

## ForesightClub – UTHM final project assessment

***Online Platform***
***7th January 2021***



Earlier this academic year, 24 students were selected to learn and apply foresight tools and methodologies in their final year research. This time around, the ForesightClub – UTHM final project assessment has been conducted on 7th January 2021 fully online due to the current health concern and movement control order.
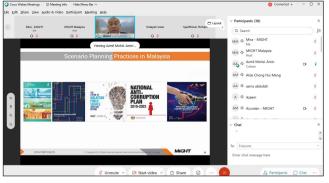
Among topics studied and evaluated were on advanced technology acceptance such as 3D printing in the food industry, usage of VR in manufacturing and drone delivery.

## Scenario Building Workshop - Future of Youth 2035
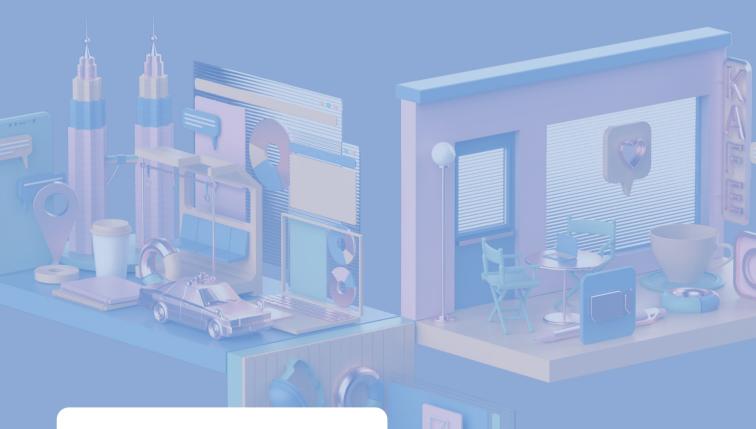
***IYRES***
***20th -21st  January 2021***



A two-day scenario building workshop was conducted with the Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) on 20-21 January 2021. The workshop was held to explore the Future of Youth 2035.  The scenario exploration exercise is a part of the 'Kajian Kompetensi Pemimpin Muda' aspect that will provide a framework guiding future leaders' characteristics and competencies.

This is the first scenario planning workshop to be run live and facilitated virtually using the CISCO WEBEX and MURAL platforms to conduct the discussions.

# Map the future

As a stakeholder and strategic policymaker, you can contribute by voicing out your opinion to help us map out the desired collective future for Malaysia.

This is an invitation by **my**Foresight® to every member of the public. If you think we could have done better or perhaps you would like us to cover a specific topic in the study of Foresight or better yet, you would like to contribute an article, we would love to hear from you.

Send your feedback and get in touch with us at foresight@might.org.my

Website: www.myforesight.my

We look forward to hearing from you.

**my**Foresight® team.