

Facebook and other social media cost UK billions

Paul Casciato, Reuters

Employees who fritter time away on Facebook, Twitter and other social media Web sites are costing British businesses billions, new research suggests.

British employment website MyJobGroup.co.uk said it polled 1,000 British workers and found that nearly six percent, or 2 million, of Britain's 34 million-strong workforce spent over an hour per day on social media while at work, amounting to more than one eighth of their entire working day.

"Our results clearly show that UK workers are spending increased time whilst at work on social media networks, which, left unchecked, could have negative repercussions on the productivity of many companies across the country," Managing Director of Myjobgroup.co.uk Lee Fayer said in a statement with the results of the survey.

MyJobGroup.co.uk said that work time lost on Facebook, Twitter and other social media networks could potentially be costing Britain up to 14 billion pounds (\$22.16 billion).

The research showed more than half of British workers (55 percent) confessed to accessing social media profiles at work, with many spending so much time friending, tweeting, adding photos and video, as well as updating their profiles, that companies' productivity was suffering as a result.

Despite the negative effects on the economy in the midst of a fragile recovery, many workers polled were in denial about the ill-effects of social media on their efficiency. Only 14 percent of respondents admitted to being less productive as a result of social media and 10 percent even claimed social media had made them more productive.

What's more, there was still widespread resistance to banning access to social networks at work, with over two thirds (68 percent) advocating some form of access during working hours. Only one third wanted sites like Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube barred during work time, demonstrating the growing importance of social media to the daily routine and the widespread resistance to its access being limited.

"Whilst we're certainly not kill-joys, people spending over an hour per day in work time on the likes of Facebook and Twitter are seriously hampering companies' efforts to boost productivity, which is more important than ever given the fragile state of our economy," Fayer said.

"Companies would do well to monitor use of social networking sites during work hours and ensure that their employees are not abusing their freedom of access to these sites."

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

Source URL (retrieved on 03/08/2014 - 1:44pm):

<http://www.ecnmag.com/news/2010/08/facebook-and-other-social-media-cost-uk-billions>