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The Year of the Multitaskers' Revenge

By Phyllis Korkki

IT'S a far different work world today than it was even 10 years ago. Technology and the economy have converged to create a set of priorities and preoccupations that are unique to our times. (...)



(...) As workers add more electronic devices, Web sites, software programs and apps to their arsenals, there is a point at which efficiency and satisfaction suffer. More devices can lead to more multitasking, which, though viewed by many as a virtue, has been shown to interfere with concentration.

More devices also harbor more vortexes of distraction, like Facebook, shopping sites and cute animal videos. Maintaining focus may well be one of the biggest daily challenges that workers will face this year, now that smartphones and tablets have become ubiquitous.

More workers will probably revolt against the idea that they must be “on” all the time, recognizing that both their work and personal lives will improve if they create stricter boundaries.

(...) More technology necessitates more training. During the recession, too many workers learned new technology imperfectly. Fortunately, corporate spending on training rose in 2011 over the previous year, according to a report in Training magazine.

(...) Both by necessity and choice, more workers are deciding to go it alone as consultants (...) and other independent operators.

Thanks to technology, it's easier than ever for “people to find projects and projects to find people.” (...)

That's great for people who seek flexibility and autonomy. But working alone can be lonely, and a lack of structure can slow productivity. That's why the phenomenon of co-working — where independent workers in a range of fields gather in one room to conduct business — is likely to spread.