

My name is David Petley. I am the support manager for an Australian-based software creation company.

I am responding to your invitation to comment on telecommuting issues. Although we do maintain office space for 2 staff members, the bulk of staff (19) all telecommute.

To answer your questions specifically -

*Where do you telework?*

From my home in Northern NSW (Chillingham)

*Approximately, how many hours per week do you telework?*

As needed, but at least 40.

*What proportion of your working week is spent teleworking?*

All of it. This is the same for all staff apart from 2 who choose to go to a work location away from their home. Note that most of our Australian-based staff get together for meetings every 2 months (we have 4 staff members overseas, 2 in the USA, 1 in Spain and 1 in France).

*What facilities and equipment do you use to telework?*

Computer, broadband internet connection (combination modem/satellite service, ADSL is not available to my home in the forest).

*What facilities and equipment are provided by your employer?*

As above, computer and BB internet connection ...and a very good, custom-made online support system to access our databases.

*Has the introduction of teleworking had a positive impact, a negative impact or no real impact on you?*

I was employed knowing I would be working from home, so am comfortable with, and prefer to, telecommute. It suits my needs and lifestyle well. I think the impact is definitely positive (saves fuel, time, and other expenses) although there are some drawbacks -

1) Communication is more difficult - although we use email, chat and even sometimes video conferencing, nothing beats face to face to see body language and to hear tone of voice. Many communications misunderstandings require far more time to solve due to this issue.

2) Hard to get good feedback from other staff members - in an office situation, it is easy to actually see whether others are too busy to communicate, the only way to find out when telecommuting is to ask...thereby interrupting them.

3) Hard to see a broad overall picture of company progress - each telecommuter focuses on a specific area of responsibility and it is hard to see the BIG picture except when we get together in regular meetings.

4) Hard to separate home life from working life.