

Does Web Surfing at Work Improve Your Quality of Work?

[By Georgia Nord](#)

Are employees more productive when they have the freedom to intermittently do non-work related activities online? Study says YES they are!

A study at the University of Melbourne found that the majority of workers engaged in surfing the Internet while at work for personal reasons. Even though there is a common perception this is unacceptable work environment behaviour, the study shows that employees who engage in this time of leisurely browsing are able to focus better when performing tasks at work.

Most employees will look for information about products, read news, play games, and watch YouTube videos. The study suggests that people need to zone out for a bit to get back their concentration. Small breaks, such as a quick surf of the internet, enables the mind to rest itself, leading to a higher total net concentration for a day's work, and as a result, increased productivity.

This does not mean that you can now spend your entire day shopping on eBay. Personal "space out browsing breaks" should be done as little as possible. This type of break should take up less than 20 percent of your work week.

If you work at a place where your company restricts access to Facebook or other personal web browsing sites, you may want to have a conversation explaining the benefits to your boss, or forward along this article. Taking a break to browse the web can actually refresh tired workers and boost productivity compared to other activities like texting, emailing, or making personal calls. Employees need to work with breaks in order to work at their fullest potential.

It is important to note that web browsing in this context means visiting sites that interest you. Compare it to going for a coffee or snack break. These kinds of breaks are satisfying and refresh the employee who is browsing the Internet, this makes web surfing a restorative action. This is more of a break then simply responding to a personal email. Responding to emails- even to your friends or family, is cognitively more demanding since you need to pay attention to what the email says and write a logical response. Web surfing lets you just zone out for a few minutes and gives your brain a break.

Even if your boss does not mind if you spend time browsing online, that does not mean you can visit whatever sites you want, and send email to whomever and about whatever you want? You must surf wisely. There are certainly some sites that are off limits. Think of this in terms of the real world. Are

there places out there at which you would feel uncomfortable running into your boss? Then you should stay away from those types of sites in the virtual world as well. You may think that you can travel around the Web anonymously. You can't. Some companies utilize software that keeps track of Web sites their employees visit.

If you are aiming to be more valuable at work allow yourself a few breaks short breaks to browse the Internet. That being said, you have to limit you time so you don't lose yourself and browse for too long. No one likes a time waster. With great power comes great responsibility — don't overuse your web-browsing privileges at work.

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