The Remote Work Report by GitLab: The Future of Work is Remote

March 2020
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Introduction

Created to foster collaboration, innovation and evolution in the future of work, The 2020 Remote Work Report dissects the state of distributed work and surfaces key motivators for both employees and employers.

This year, over 3,000 respondents – across various industries, roles, and geographic locations – candidly shared their experiences, creating a platform for understanding how remote is changing society, and how individuals interact with their vocation.

By uncovering best practices and unmet needs, The Remote Work Report has synthesized the invaluable contributions from thousands of professionals allowing leaders to remove roadblocks and help teams thrive in a post-office world.

Project background

Objective
Explore the future of remote working in order to inform future marketing and thought leadership content for GitLab.

Methodology
GitLab surveyed 3,000 adult professionals, aged 21 and older, who work remotely or have the option to work remotely and are in roles with digital output from January 30, 2020 to February 10, 2020.

Sample
N=3,000
» Adults 21+ years old
» Work remotely or have the option to work remotely (no outsourced)
» Roles that have digital output
» Letters and green/red triangle throughout the report indicate significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.
» Research conducted by Savanta
Key Takeaways

All-Remote is Surging
All-remote is the purest form of remote work, with each team member on a level playing field. 43% of remote workers feel that it is important to work for a company where all employees are remote. Currently, more than 1 in 4 respondents belong to an all-remote organization, with no offices, embracing asynchronous workflows as each employee works in their own native time zone. An added 12% work all-remote with each employee synched to a company-mandated time zone.

Everyone Can Contribute
The true power of remote teams is unleashed when everyone is empowered to move the organization forward. 56% of remote workers said that everyone in their company can contribute to process, values, and company direction, with 50% also defaulting to shared documents and relying on meetings only as a last resort.

Debunking Remote Work Myths
Remote workers aren’t all traveling nomads. Findings showed 38% saw lack of commute as a top benefit, with that time instead spent with family (43%), working (35%), resting (36%), and exercising (34%). Employees find themselves to overall be more productive (52%) and efficient (48%), with 74% of remote workers agreeing that their company lives by its values. Additionally, unlike traditionally thought, 52% of remote workers actually travel less.

Accessibility and Opportunity to Grow/Continue Your Career as a Parent
Benefits of working remotely have enabled employees to focus on their families without having to give up their career. 34% percent found the ability to care for family a top benefit of remote work, in addition to 53% citing schedule flexibility and 38% saying lack of commute. It was also found that, in place of commuting, 43% are able to spend more quality time with family — 55% of respondents having children under 18.

Remote Work Levels the Playing Field
14% of remote workers surveyed have a disability or chronic illness and 83% of those workers were able to work because of remote work. Remote work levels the playing field: it fosters a better sense of work/life harmony and creates opportunity for everyone to contribute in the workplace.

Remote is Becoming Second Nature
Nearly 90% of those surveyed are satisfied with existing tools and processes that enable remote team communications, and feels that their leadership team provides autonomy while working remotely.
Remote is Here to Stay
86% of respondents believe remote work is the future. But it’s also the present, as evidenced by 84% of those surveyed saying that they are able to accomplish all of their tasks remotely right now.

Remote is the Ultimate Hiring Advantage
62% of respondents said that they would consider leaving a co-located company for a remote role. Why? Everyone values remote benefits differently, from reduced anxiety to improved health to reduced office politics. Said another way, the freedom of remote universally matters for a remarkably diverse array of reasons.

The Work From Anywhere Opportunity
47% said that managing at-home distractions were a top challenge. It’s time to phase out the phrase “work from home,” empowering team members to work from anywhere that they’re optimally productive. Reimbursing for co-working spaces and external offices is a good place to start.

All The Feels
Nearly half of those surveyed consider themselves “Lucky” to work remotely, with Practical, Valued, Smart, and Proud rounding out the top 5. Fewer than 10% associated with the terms Alone, Tired and Misunderstood.

Remote ≠ Alone
When in-person interactions are intentional, as is the case in a remote setting, they matter more. 82% of remote workers say their company supports in-person gatherings through events, summits, meet-ups, and more. Meanwhile, 66% are already connected to remote work communities.
# The Remote Worker

## Department
- 26% **IT Networking Security**
- 12% **Operations**
- 10% **Accounting Finance**
- 9% **Customer Service**
- 9% **Management**
- 8% **Administration**
- 8% **HR**
- 11% **Other**

## Title
- 29% **Manager**
- 23% **Associate/Assistant**
- 10% **Director**
- 8% **Senior Manager/Senior Director**
- 8% **C-Level**
- 21% **Other**

## Frequency of working remote
- 35% **Occasionally**
- 33% **Frequently**
- 16% **Very often**
- 16% **All the time**

## Length of time working remote
- 29% 0-2 years
- 32% 3-4 years
- 25% 5-9 years
- 10% 10-15 years
- 4% 16+ years
### Employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business owners</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Primary work location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home office</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-working space</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee shop</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work from outside home city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequently</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost all the time</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Residence country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of the companies that allow remote work, the majority have a hybrid approach and 1-in-4 have a 100% remote policy where employees work in their own native time zone.

Companies in the US are more likely to allow employees to work 100% remotely and they work in their own time zone or a company mandated one.

**Company policy on remote work**

- **37%** *Hybrid-remote (part of the team works in-office, part of the team works remotely)*
  - 35%
  - 39%
  - 40%
  - 36%

- **26%** *100% remote, each employee works in their own native time zone*
  - ▲ 30%
  - ▼ 23%
  - ▼ 23%
  - ▼ 22%

- **25%** *Remote work is allowed or tolerated, but is not the norm or default*
  - ▲ 21%
  - ▼ 28%
  - ▼ 28%
  - ▼ 34%

- **12%** *100% remote, every employee is synched to a company-mandated time zone*
  - ▲ 15%
  - ▼ 10%
  - ▼ 8%
  - ▼ 8%

*The green triangle represents significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.*

**% of Company Working Remote**

- **10%** 100%
- **22%** 1-25%
- **13%** 76-99%
- **24%** 51-75%
- **31%** 26-50%
- **32%** 30%
- **32%** 26%

% of companies in which 26% to 50% work remote in each country…
Attitudes on remote working

90% I would recommend working remotely to a friend

87% I am satisfied with tools and processes that enable remote team communication

86% My leadership team gives me agency and autonomy while working remotely

86% Remote work is the future of work

84% I am able to accomplish all of my tasks remotely

84% My leadership team understands what it takes to operate a team remotely

62% I would consider leaving my co-located company for a remote role

% of Remote Workers with Chronic Illness or Disability

Ability to work remotely have enabled 83% of remote employees with a chronic illness or disability to contribute to a workplace.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Country A</th>
<th>Country B</th>
<th>Country C</th>
<th>Country D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>52% Flexible scheduling</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>38% Lack of commute</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>35% Cost savings</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>34% Able to care for family, pets, aging/sick relatives, etc.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>32% Reduced anxiety/stress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>26% Improved health (mental, physical, spiritual, etc.)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22% Freedom to travel/relocate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20% Able to live where you want to live</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18% Reduced office politics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letters indicate countries that are significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence. Letters under the %s indicate which country the cell is being compared to. The green triangle represents significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.
Challenges and feelings

It is no surprise that managing at-home distraction is one of the biggest challenges with working remotely. Collaboration with colleagues/clients and isolation are second and third biggest challenges.

47% Managing at-home distractions

35% Collaborating with colleagues/clients

35% Isolation/loneliness

29% Motivation

28% Taking adequate time away from work

28% Disconnecting from work/burnout

24% Networking/fostering career development

1% Other

6% None of the above

The green triangle represents significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.
If remote work is not an option...

Almost half of remote workers would be willing to resume commuting. However, 36% of them are not and they would search for a new remote role elsewhere. Interestingly, those who are younger than 55 years old are significantly more likely to search for a new remote role.

- **48% Retain your location, but resume commuting**
- **36% Search for a new remote role elsewhere (including working for yourself)**
- **9% Relocate**
- **6% Retire/quit working**
- **1% Other**

*The green triangle represents significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>21-38</th>
<th>39-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retain your location, but resume commuting</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search for a new remote role elsewhere (including working for yourself)</td>
<td>▲36%</td>
<td>▲38%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocate</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retire/quit working</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>▲18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The green triangle represents significantly higher/lower at 95% confidence.
Relocation

**Likelihood to Relocate**

- **12%** Yes, I have relocated recently
- **9%** Yes, I am in the process of relocating
- **22%** Yes, I am considering relocating
- **35%** No, but I would be open to doing so
- **22%** No, I am not interested in relocating

**Reasons...**

- **28%** Cost of living
- **19%** Lifestyle change
- **17%** Experience a new location
- **14%** Be closer to family
- **10%** Better schools/opportunity for your family
- **6%** Becoming a digital nomad
- **5%** Move to a bucket list "destination"

Males are significantly more likely to have relocated recently or in the process of relocating.

Females are significantly more likely to be open to/interested in relocating.

Cost of living is the main driver for willingness to relocate.
Company and remote work

Benefits to the employers

52% Increased productivity
48% Increased efficiency
44% Increased employee morale
43% Improved employee loyalty/retention
27% Hiring the best and brightest
26% Improved carbon footprint
23% Improved communication
23% Less bureaucracy and politics
19% Increased inclusivity
19% Increased diversity
18% Improved documentation and process
18% Increased time zone coverage

74% of remote workers agree that their company lives by its values.

Contribution to process, values, and company direction

56% Yes, everyone can contribute
24% Dependent on the topic it's handled on a case-by-case basis
17% No, only senior management and executives make these decisions

Communication scheme

14% Not sure
50% Default to shared documents, only use meetings as a last resort
35% Default to meetings first

Company reimbursement

44% Neither home internet nor coworking expenses are reimbursed
21% Home internet alone is reimbursed
21% Home internet and coworking expenses are reimbursed
82% of remote workers say their company supports in-person interactions through events, summits, meet-ups, etc.

66% are connected to meaningful remote work communities (e.g., Slack groups, message boards, forums, or meet-up communities).

43% of remote workers feel it is important to work for a company where ALL employees are remote...

And this is significantly more important to remote workers in the US than UK, Canada and Australia.

In-person interaction support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connection to remote work communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Plan to do so in the near future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographics

Age distribution
- 52% 21-38
- 37% 39-54
- 22% 55+

Ethnicity*
- 76% White
- 4% Asian
- 12% African-Am.
- 2% Other
- 5% Hispanic/Latino

Marital status
- 24% Single/ Never married
- 68% Married/ Living with partner
- 7% Divorced/ Separated/Widowed

Caregiver status
- 21% Yes
- 78% No

Household income
- 25% Under £30,420
- 73% Over £30,420
- 52% Over CA$84,950
- 65% Over A$82,436

Household income
- 16% Up to $50k
- 17% $50k-75k
- 15% $75k-100k
- 27% $100k-150k
- 24% $150k+

Family composition
- 46% No children under 18
- 55% Have children under 18

Gender split
- 50% Male
- 49% Female
- 1% Non binary/Gender not listed/Prefer not to answer
## Firmographics

### Industry
- **20%** Internet and technology
- **15%** Healthcare and pharmaceutical
- **15%** Finance/Insurance/Accounting services
- **9%** Educational services
- **7%** Professional/Scientific/Technical services
- **7%** Government (Local, State, Federal)
- **5%** Non-profit organization
- **5%** Engineering
- **4%** Telecommunications
- **4%** Real estate/Rental/Leasing
- **3%** Advertising/PR/Marketing
- **2%** Travel
- **2%** Legal services
- **2%** Information and publishing
- **1%** Market research

### Number of employees
- **18%** 1-50 employees
- **14%** 51-200 employees
- **12%** 201-500 employees
- **16%** 501-1,000 employees
- **17%** 1,001-5,000 employees
- **8%** 5,001-10,000 employees
- **4%** 10,001-20,000 employees
- **10%** 20,000+ employees