



Effective Data Management for the Future of Work: **A New Business Imperative**

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, **working remotely has become the norm** for “knowledge workers,” those people whose jobs allow them to complete tasks untethered to a specific location.



Statistics vary as to the number of Americans doing their jobs from home because of shelter-in-place orders in effect. According to one survey, by mid-March 2020 [less than a quarter](#) of U.S. workers who could work from home had made plans to do so. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics holds that [29 percent](#) of American employees have jobs they can perform remotely; the Pew Research Center puts that figure at [24 percent](#).

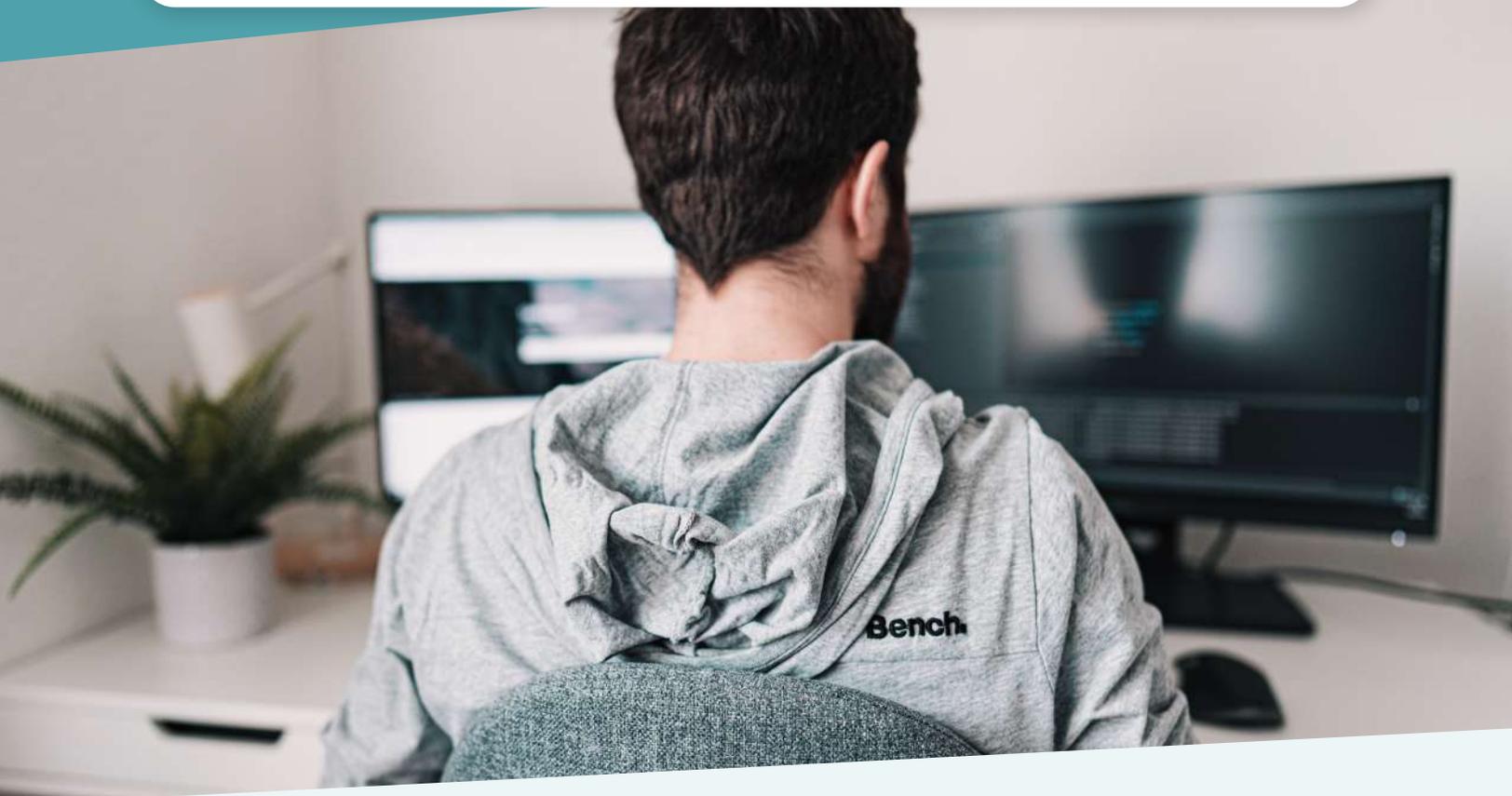
No matter what the specific number is, one thing is certain. For [millions of Americans](#), working from home is now the new normal. The global workforce may well have been heading toward the extinction of the sort of workplace so ingrained in much of the world's modern culture that it [spawned satirical](#) comic strips, TV shows, and movies. However, it's a shift that COVID-19 has fast-tracked tremendously.

“The coronavirus outbreak has triggered an anxious trial run for remote work at a grand scale,” Derek Thompson writes in [The Atlantic](#). “What we learn in the next few months could help shape a future of work that might have been inevitable, with or without a once-in-a-century public-health crisis.”

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What businesses are likely to see, even after the pandemic eases, is that few people who went remote as a result of the quarantine directives wish to return to their cubicles. The interesting thing is that from a business standpoint, there's practically no reason to make them. Instead, employers will come to see the importance of digitized data management.

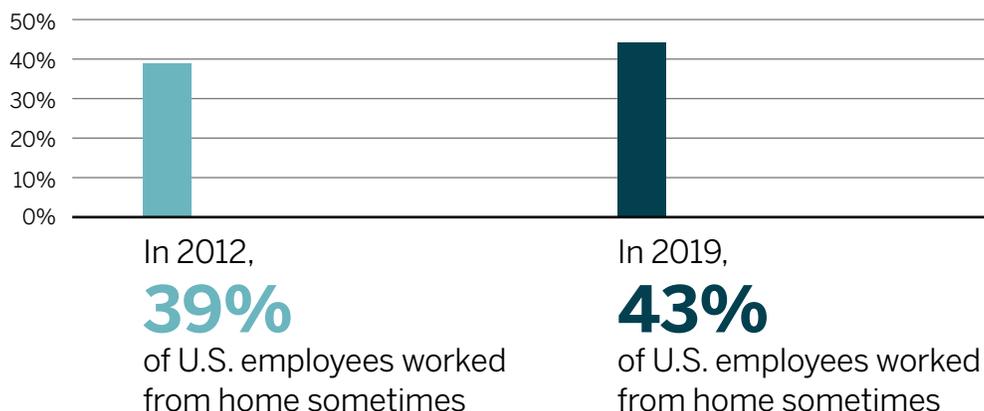
This ebook explores how having such systems in place can contribute to an organization's success, both now and as the workplace continues to evolve in the future.



Remote Work by the Numbers and the Future of Work

Though some employers have thus far been reluctant to allow workers to perform their jobs from home, being able to work remotely is exactly what the overwhelming majority of employees want. A staggering 95 percent of respondents to a [recent survey](#) said they wish to work from home or otherwise outside their employer's main office, and 74 percent reported being willing to leave a position that didn't allow them that luxury.

Prior to the onset of coronavirus-related work-from-home mandates, the shift to remote work was already in motion. In 2019, 43 percent of U.S. employees worked from home sometimes, up from 39 percent seven years earlier, according to a Gallup [poll](#). Indeed, the list of reasons to embrace remote work is long, for both employee and employer. It includes increased worker [productivity](#), cash savings, better work-life balance, and more.



“As execs become more comfortable with the idea that work is fluid and can happen anywhere at any time, they come to realize that simply having a body to fill a seat for the sake of doing so is no longer worth the expense, nor is it effective in accomplishing goals,” reads a [blog post](#) on remote work from staffing agency Mondo.

That this shift would not have been possible decades ago speaks to the increased availability of ever more sophisticated, collaboration-focused technologies that allow coworkers, supervisors, and employees to communicate across states, countries, and even continents. It shines a bright spotlight on the technology, so any shortcomings are quickly rooted out by users.

Thus, successful remote work is not a given owing to the technological age, but rather a possibility based on the quality of the solutions used.



“As Forbes contributor Jun Wu warns in a recent [piece](#) for that publication, “Not all software and tools are created equal in this universe of remote working tools. Often, even with the proliferation of software in employee’s desktops, many employees still report disconnection and burnout.”

People want to work remotely, but, perhaps ironically, they also want to continue to feel as connected to their colleagues and companies as they did when they worked in a traditional office setting.

Thus, the workflow-related technologies that succeed in the long term will be those that easily accommodate remote work and most closely mimic the best of the ‘user experience’ that was inherent in traditional workplaces.



Meeting the Challenge of Remote Collaboration

Working remotely, however beneficial to organization and employee alike, does come with its own set of challenges.

“Many business leaders think that ‘going remote’ is as simple as sending a worker away from the office, equipped with a laptop and a to-do list,” Laurel Farrer, founder of the Remote Work Association and CEO of Distribute Consulting, said in [an interview](#) with Business Insider. “Unfortunately, it’s not that simple. In fact, when the correct policies and procedures are not created to support off-site employees, terrible consequences are likely to occur.”

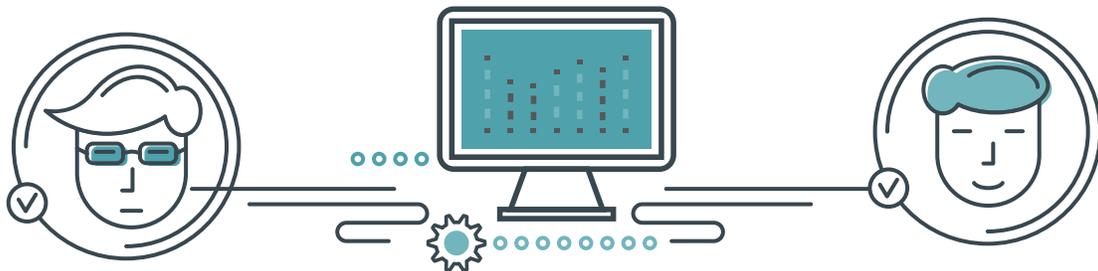
In addition to the employee burnout mentioned earlier, these consequences can include career stagnation, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and missed information from not being onsite during in-person, verbal discussions.



Much of the burden of setting the proper foundation for remote work lies with the employer, but workers also play a role in determining whether the set-up will be successful. Being disciplined, self-motivated, and responsive all make for a good start in a telecommuting employee, but those characteristics on their own are not enough.

Simply put, “remote workers have to be tech-savvy,” [writes](#) Entrepreneur contributor Anna Johansson in a blog post for that outlet. “They’ll be spending the majority of their time working on computers and other devices. Therefore, they need to understand how to use software and important programs as efficiently as possible. The last thing you can afford is for your remote employees to constantly be tying up your IT team with simple problems that shouldn’t be an issue.”

They also need to be able and willing to make full use of collaboration software, such as tools that help schedule meetings, manage projects, share and edit documentation, and brainstorm ideas among workers. Like remote work itself, when used correctly these tools can help save organizations significant [time and money](#).



Data Management Comes to the Rescue of Employers and Employees

Employers may not realize it, but a significant cash drain to businesses comes in the form of unsuccessful searches. The cost to an organization of not being able to locate specific information at the time that information is needed is approximately [\\$3,300](#) per employee per year, according to market intelligence firm IDC. “Generally, this issue with lost information comes from siloed data across email inboxes, and separate communication environments,” Rebekah Carter writes in a [piece](#) for uctoday.com.

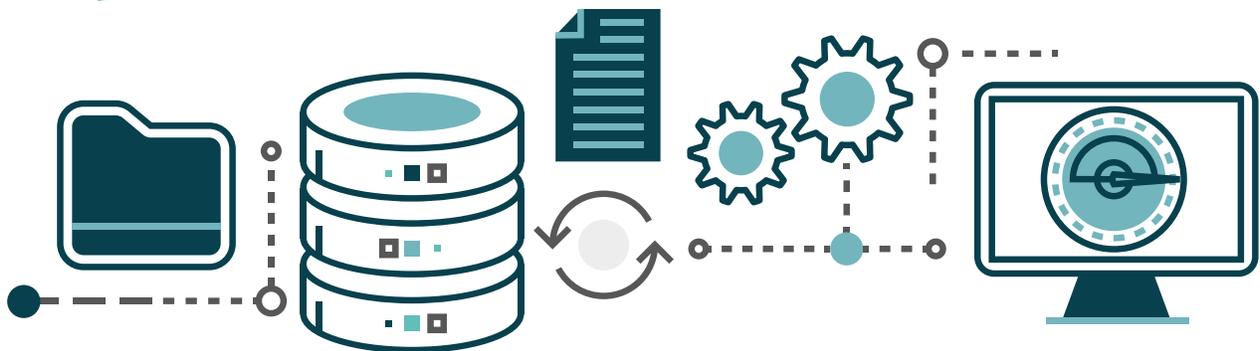
IDC also noted that the average knowledge worker spends 2.5 hours or 30 percent of the workday searching for information. Assuming an average salary of \$80,000 per year per employee, an organization of 1,000 employees stands to lose \$25 million yearly due to the inability to find and retrieve documents.

When you consider the enormous volumes of physical documentation many companies (even smaller and mid-sized ones) already store onsite and the vast [amount of data](#) humans are expected to generate by the end of 2020, the idea of keeping up in the form of paper files is not only unrealistic, but practically impossible.



Enter data management systems. Using computer systems and software, these systems store and index millions of files.

“As the volume and sources of data grows, so do the complexities that can quickly stifle business growth and decision making,” David Roe writes in a recent [piece](#) for CMSwire.com. “To solve these challenges, enterprises should not solely focus on how “new” the data is, but instead, they should focus on how it is collected, stored, analyzed, and how efficiently they make it usable.”



Digitized Data Management for the Distributed Workforce: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

The modern work landscape calls for a modern data management solution. Cloud-based data management is ideal for the new global reality of a significantly distributed workforce. As fewer people remain chained to a single 'home base' office day in and day out, leanness and agility will take the place of tradition in business operations.

Ripcord has pioneered a cloud-hosted data management system that is an ideal fit for this novel landscape. The platform, Canopy, allows huge amounts of data - both structured and unstructured - to be scanned, indexed, and made fully searchable. The content then becomes preserved in perpetuity, doing away with the need for expensive searches through cardboard file boxes or warehouses full of physical file cabinets.



Productive, efficient remote work necessitates that workers have access to digitized data. A cloud-based data management platform gives remote workers the tools they need to work at home as easily as they once worked in the office. It could be argued that such a platform makes work even easier than that simply in terms of how quickly a search for specific information can be performed in a digital environment.

Whether you are in a physical office or out and about, slogging through paper documentation is tedious and slow. Even if an organization disregards the cost of such human hours, by the time employees conduct a lengthy physical search and obtain the needed information, the business opportunity that may have prompted the search could well be gone.

Digitizing data can open an organization up to freedoms and flexibility it never had with paper-based systems. With Canopy, for example, a company can access any of its stored information at any time of day or night, anywhere in the world, from any connected device — all in a wholly secure, cloud-based instance.



About Ripcord

[Ripcord](#) is on a mission to digitize the world. Using vision-guided robots, AI and machine learning, we scan, enrich, and organize an organization's most important paper documents, no matter the volume. Our proprietary cloud software, Canopy, enables the instantaneous categorization, indexing, search, and retrieval of every part of an entity's scanned documentation. Ripcord saves companies time and money and frees up human employees for more of the work they truly enjoy.

**We're digitizing Earth,
industry by industry.**

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