



The Internet Economy by Jeff Davidson

Much of the work you do today requires going on to the web to gather information or to communicate with others. Unquestionably, the web allows us to execute both functions with greater speed and ease than ever before. Internet access also represents a dilemma for managers and staff. Each time a person goes on to the web, he or she is potentially subject to the temptation of visiting a few favorite sites, checking the news, seeing what mail has come in and perhaps sending out mail as well.

How does one function effectively in the face of the irresistible force that the Internet represents? Anyone and everyone is subject to its lure, and many of us now depend on it for our economic livelihood. Like the call of the sirens, day and night, each of us is fully aware that a wonderland of news information, entertainment, colors, sounds, messages from friends and offers from afar, both worthy and absurd, are ours to behold simply by getting online.

What's needed today is a new orientation toward work and the tools of technology that support us while offering the double-edged sword of endlessly tempting us to fritter away our time. Here are suggestions:

- * Keep a timer by your computer, and anytime you visit the Internet or check email beyond what is strictly necessary to execute the task at hand, time yourself. A minute and a half to three minutes, a few times a day, is acceptable. One long bout of ten or fifteen minutes before lunch, during lunch, or just after lunch is understandable. More than that and you're stealing from your employer.

- * Schedule those times each day, or establish a daily routine, when you will allow yourself to visit the Internet and/or check messages for personal reasons. Then hold to your schedule.

- * When you really want to get things done, and your work does not require visiting the web, remove the connection if you can do so easily. Instead, work on a computer that is not connected to the web, or make a pact with yourself that for 60, 90, or 120 minutes you will not digress.

Jeff Davidson is "The Work-Life Balance Expert®" for our time-pressed workforce. He wrote "Breathing Space" and the "60 Second Procrastinator." Visit www.Work-LifeBalance.net or call 800.735.1994.

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