

Bioethics of the telework: telecommuting with quality of life.

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ABSTRACT:

This PAPER introduces some experiences of telework or virtual collaboration, taking the level of well-being as an axis reached by who part in them. Some myths will be analyzed on the telework, to think about the quality of life of the teleworker and how to improve it.

1. Experience 1: Telecapacitados: (Teletrained)

“Telecapacitados” was carried out in the TIC Commission of the association USUARIA, and was financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a public corporation created in 1970 by the Parliament of Canada, to solve social, economical and political problems of developing countries. To carry out this investigation that includes Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay, was formed a multidisciplinary team of people with and without disabilities. Telecapacitados's overall goal was to detect how many people with disability could be inserted at work through teleworking. This required census data contrast with the profile of teleworking in our region in accordance with Etis-lac (previous research conducted with support from IDRC, which addressed the issue of Internet service exporters in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica: www.etis-lac.org.ar (2007)

According to official census data, the prevalence rate, that is to say, the proportion of people with disabilities (PWD) in the population of the nine countries studied, is 7.18%, 36,436,674 equivalent to PWD.

44%, about 16 million is part of the economically active population (EAP). Among the economically active population with disabilities in the region under study, unemployment stands at 77.73%, meaning that affects 12 million people. The scenarios constructed allowed us to see that millions of people could be benefited through telework if they are properly trained. Another objective of Telecapacitados was to meet the different social actors involved in this process. To do so, were interviewed teleworkers with disabilities, contracting PWD, public officials, union representatives, members of NGOs and members of human resources were consulting.

1.1. Teleworkers with disabilities

Both in ETIS-LAC as Telecapacitados, the sample of teleworkers surveyed, demonstrated the following coincidences:

Average Age of 40 years, majority presence of the masculine gender, and high level of education.

We emphasize the following points obtained in our interviews:

- * Many people telecommute and they did not know that they did.
- * There are experiences of teleworkers in a wide variety of activities; opportunities are not restricted to the areas of information or communications.
- * Those that are recognized as telecommuters make a very positive account of his experience, and relate improvements in their relational life in the family and work. They argue, in many cases, that telework has reduced the weight that the barriers of accessibility and transportation, through dignified work.
- * The civil society organizations have been a bridge, in most cases, for people with disabilities started in this type of modality.

Although we have contacted a majority of teleworkers who work under dependency ratio, we believe that the recruitment form is not decisive in the development of this form, or the satisfaction that it generates among teleworkers.

Employer discrimination is the main pointed identified obstacle, when teleworking. It also identified the lack of knowledge on telework and regulations, and self-discrimination.

- * About the level of income, the majority of the interviewed people are satisfied with what is perceived and those who are not associate the dissatisfaction with the modality of the telework.
- * With regard to requests for telework, most focusing on skills that the person should definitely develop, such as the ability to manage ICT capacity and organizational venture, trust, self-improvement.
- * In addition, we think that from the formal education there is no a direct relation with the development of these competences, for which the auto training has received a **significant importance**. So self-empowerment has become very significant.
- * As for the type of tools to telecommute, we observe that a very costly technology is not necessary. The majority of the teleworkers counts with a standard computer with Internet connection.

1.2. Contractors

We found a widespread ignorance among the contractors about both subjects of the Investigation, that's why hiring of teleworkers with disabilities is presented tentatively in the respondent universe. Some of those interviewed are declared as potential contractors but they are not yet. We did not detected planned programs covering aspects such as appropriate selection processes, specific training or digital access, except in those cases that they were part of telecommuting pilot programs that do not exist in all countries. Regarding the Experiences with teleworkers with disabilities, the majority of respondents plan to expand or continue this kind of recruitment.

1.3. Public Sector

When we asked about considerations whether the State was interested in encouraging teleworking, the response was positive in 20 cases and negative in 8 cases. When we wanted to know about this interest in promoting telework in the public sector, respondents wielded the following reasons: to generate more and better jobs, because it is a way of work which included many future prospects, telework policies are lacking to direct money from the pensions of disabled people into productive activities.

Interviewed people who felt that the State was not interested in encouraging teleworking wielded the following reasons: the state has no policies and then acts on impulse, not interested in hiring people with disabilities, serves private companies and not public sector activities.

1.4. Trade unions

The interviewed have a vision Respondents divided between the benefits it can bring telework as a form of employment inclusion, people with disabilities and the risks of engaging in an activity not adequately protected in terms of worker rights. We consider as necessary, first, to inform these organizations about the experiences of teleworking in the region have joined PWD that achieved job stability through decent work. In a second instance, it would be appropriate to involve unions in programs of integration of persons with disabilities.

1.5. NGOs

We find many interested organizations, hoping the information and assistance team to practice this modality. Among those who have negative opinion, the Association between "Telework = work = call center junk or scams as circles of money. It is striking to note that all NGOs consulted they use ICT to non-paid Work of militancy, but it not appears the relationship between the use of ICT-lived as positive, and telework, as potentially negative and producer of segregation. About legal rules that would impede the inclusion of people with disabilities into the labor market in Argentina what it first appears is the lack executive Decision to enforce the law, besides the absence of penalty. Is remarkable that none of the respondents know about the existence of public policies in the Field of education and telework training.

1.6. HR Consultants

Among the many questions that were made to respondents, the answers to highlight potential barriers around teleworking, which revolved around: the misinformation, The culture of rigid work schedules, not suitable for all jobs resistance to change, lack of specific legislation, lack of ICT training, ICT infrastructure Costs, teleworking association of informal work, non-compliance with agreed commitments employer, physical working preference.

Website: <http://www.telecapacitados.tic.org.ar/index.en.php>

2. Experience 2: bioethics of teleworking:

During the presentation of the paper "Telework as a tool for the dignified life of persons with disabilities" filed on October 28, 2009 at the Campus of the UNRC, Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, Córdoba, Argentina, in the framework of the Days of Bioethics woke up a very rich debate, which will be reproduced. The lecture had two instances: first, they presented the findings of the mentioned research through a video (available on the site of research www.telecapacitados.tic.org.ar or by: <http://www.youtube.com/user/ProyectoJaramillo#play/all/uploads-all/0/ifu67n-zKnU>)

In the second part, it was spoken about the experience of researchers with disabilities, Paula Maciel and Martín Balbinder, taking as central the concept of independent living / dignity life, trying to answer the question "What does it mean teleworking in decent conditions for people with disabilities? In our research we say that telework opens the right to work wherever we want and Independent Living philosophy speaks of the right to decide where to live. Thus, bringing together this two lines of thought, the concept of telework is defined as worthy to decide how and where to live and work. To do this, ideally, it has to be given certain minimum conditions. Telecapacitados was a very interesting pilot about how to achieve them.

Being an interdisciplinary group composed of people from several countries from various disciplines of origin, with varying degrees of knowledge of the subject of disability, with or without disabled and with varying degrees of interest in changing their daily practice. Luckily for teleworkers with disabilities, most of the team was willing to learn and grow. This experience was a source of learning. The members with disabilities have learned to raise more operating their needs and best strategies for moving towards a more accessible and inclusive word, taking into account that the theoretical learning about disability not always involves a change of habits, traditions and customs. Group agreements were needed about the best ways to communicate, taking into account that not all technological tools for teleworking meet accessibility requirements, because the method is still new. Besides, since the members have disabilities varied, they not always have knowledge of other disabilities. It was remarkable throughout the research, peer support where each member shared the difficulties on the way,

Learning from the experience of the others. The members with disabilities had without plan, a triple role: as researchers, such as disability experts and peer support.

As an interviewee says "I do not talk about equality, but of equal opportunities. Equality includes the same starting level. The equation assumes a gap that needs to be compensated in some way. "

It was necessary to work permanently within the research team, in removing barriers to ensure that all data collection instruments and methodology used work should be accessible and the results thereof were presented in accessible formats.

This effort included the areas of Web site project; exchanges among participants (Netiquette accessible), forms of data gathering, and physical accessibility of venues face presentations, and outreach activities. Our guide was the concept of Design for all, which is the intervention in environments, products and services so that everyone, including future generations, regardless of age, gender, capabilities or cultural background, can enjoy participating in the construction of our society. We hired an Web design expert in accessibility, who got any user, that use any web browser or any technology to surf the Web, you can visit our site and get a total and complete understanding of the information contained in it, as well as have full and complete ability to interact on the site without facing technological barriers to providing flexibility and accessibility to accommodate the needs of each user and their preferences.

<http://www.caminandoutopias.org.ar/tesis/tesis11.php>.

Some members were supportive technology users, which includes all hardware and software systems that enable people with disabilities to use mainstream computer systems. Though it was not treated during the investigation, each teleworker had already adapted to its environment, ergonomics is important to mention that analyzes those aspects that cover artificial environment constructed by man, directly related to the acts and gestures involved in any activity. In all applications the aim is common: it is to adapt products, tasks, tools, spaces and the environment in general to the ability and needs of people, so as to improve the efficiency, safety and welfare consumers, users or workers. It is the definition of comfort, efficiency, productivity, and suitability of an object, from the perspective of using it. Ergonomic means to design products and to adapt work of these people and not vice versa. The logic that uses the ergonomics is based on the axiom that people are more important than the objects or production processes, therefore, in those cases which pose any conflict of interest between people and things, should prevailed people.

Ergonomic principles are based on the design of products or work to be approached from a knowledge of what skills and abilities, and limitations of people (considered as users or workers, respectively), designing the elements that they use taking into account these characteristics.

<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ergonom%C3%ADa>

Finally, the speakers referred to their own experience as users of personal assistance, noting that without this service would not be possible the participation in this research. The field of disability is broad and very diverse. There are different types of disabilities and different grades, different limitations and shortcomings and therefore different needs. People with disabilities must be assisted in what they cannot do and should be treated as independent in spite of their dependence. Most people with disabilities are dependent, because of their limitations and need to be assisted in their daily activities, such as dressing,

shopping, preparing meals, cleaning, etc. In fact, the attendees help in all those activities that the person would do by itself, if not had a physical, sensory, mental or learning disability.

It is very important to have quality in the cares to get more independence. The person attending should understand that personal assistance means that the user has control of the services and how they should be made, according to their own needs, capacities, circumstances and aspirations. [Http://www.minusval2000.com/literatura/articulos/dependenciaIndependencia.html](http://www.minusval2000.com/literatura/articulos/dependenciaIndependencia.html)

From now, here is the material that we, as researchers, we carry the day. But before and after the presentation, we developed a very rich exchange with participants. The previous paper talked about euthanasia, so appeared how to ensure a dignified life of people who are not terminally ill, though may seriously affect his dignity. It was emphasized that not only required a definition of dignified life, but to consider the necessary support to improve the quality of people life. The participants were able to connect with situations in which their quality of life was threatened by lack of choices or by the presence of barriers in the environment, including gaps edificial of the university where the encounter occurred. Misinformation is troubling about the lack of knowledge on issues of disability in many forums on bioethics.

The voice of people with functional diversity is the one with the clarity of thought necessary to carry out that change. The group of people with disabilities has publicly asked to be heard in bioethics committees. (http://www.diversocracia.org/docs/Fundamentos_bioeticos_para_la_inDependencia.doc)

Telecapacitados showed that ignorance and prejudice, both of telework (isolates Telework, telecommuting is precarious employment, telecommuting is only for those who cannot do anything else) and disability (All activity with people with disabilities is rehabilitation, People with disabilities are conflicting or lack of autonomy, for example) can result in resistance to change. You may also run that risk in the field of bioethics. At this point, we say it is an ethical issue, giving voice to this group to discuss issues such as achieving a better life for each of us.

In our research we are talking about that teleworking opens the right to work where they want and the Independent Living philosophy speaks of the right to decide where to live. Bringing together two lines of thought, the concept of telework is defined as to decide how and where to live and work. To do this, ideally, have to be given certain minimum conditions. Telecapacitados was a very interesting pilot about how to achieve it. Being an interdisciplinary group composed of people from various countries from various disciplines of origin, with varying degrees of knowledge about the subject of disability, with or without disabilities and with varying degrees of interest in changing their daily practice. Members with disabilities had, without having planned, a triple role: As researchers, such as disability experts (from the standpoint of theoretical and experiential) and peer support, helping ourselves in developing strategies and overcome difficulties.

Experience 3: The virtual NGOs.

Many people with disabilities in the region have found Internet as a place to meet, build shared knowledge and advance the defense of their rights. The specific health experience is a factor in the life of the person, very important, but besides there are others things that define us as social beings with desires and aspirations that go beyond basic survival:

We are citizens with rights and duties that are part of communities formed by a variety of human beings. The theoretical speech that endorses the progress of the medical model to the model of independent life makes clear that what has to be repaired is not a sick individual but a society who does not give content to all the citizens. ([Http://www.forovidaindependiente.org/node/99](http://www.forovidaindependiente.org/node/99))

The social model of disability describes the factors that impose restrictions on people with disabilities. Factors such as individual prejudice, discrimination, institutional, public buildings inaccessible, unusable transport systems, segregated education, the omission of the adjustments in the work environment and other characteristics of the individual. The work focuses on society to change policies, attitudes and economic discrimination against persons with disabilities.

In contrast, the medical model locates the "problem" in the individual by identifying the causes of this problem as a result of functional limitations or loss, organic or psychological, which is assumed to manifest disability. The medical model emphasizes individual responsibility in limiting experiencing. In this view, still dominant, the problem is stated as the individual deficiencies and proposes solutions in the hands of technical professionals, focusing on achieving specific health status professionally correct the deficiency, improve the functional abilities of the individual is paramount intervene to achieve "cure" and

"integration" of the patient. The usual result is that the person made up their self-image as a problem. In many cases this is usually due to a strong sense of guilt and shame which involves the denial of self and the socialization, self-paralysis as a social being, providing conditions conducive to the systematic discrimination and extended to all areas the society.

Theoretical discourse that supports the advancement of the medical model to the model of independent living, explains that what has to be repaired is not an individual sick but a society that does not accommodate everyone. ([Http://www.forovidaindependiente.org/node/99](http://www.forovidaindependiente.org/node/99))

3. Experience 4: Web creativity: joint writing experiences

In this case, we will discuss what we taught ourselves to write together with distant persons to obtain a product that represents the synergy group, is a thesis, a paper book, magazine group, an investigation, which he sometimes had to ICT related issues and sometimes not.

Web Creativity Web is a term we invented to describe the creative processes that have the scenario of the Web. You can designate both the exchanges that took place in an online community during which generates something new, innovative content creation, collaborative learning in virtual environments, innovations in Web design and any other situation that combines Internet usage and associated technologies and the emergence of innovative elements. In this text, in particular, we focus on virtual communities as a creative space.

In this regard, consider it essential to think not only as an Internet technology platform, but look at it as a space for interaction between human beings, which is being transformed by the same interaction that unfolds. Internet is not only linked machines. It is a network of human networks that relate to each other and where computers are only the technology platform that allows mediate these relationships. It is clear that that is based on an interconnected computer technology platform, makes this network of human networks work with new and special features. Relations to be mediated by the technological platform, communications are modified.

For ICTs to contribute to human development needs to be inserted into existing practices, between persons, groups or organizations. Based on these specific practices, it is possible to turn the ICT tools to enhance the work in the real world and concrete. The social appropriation (and staff) of the ICT involves an act of creativity, incorporating specific aspects to the task, with the combination of elements previously unconnected changing habits, customs, practices, interaction with humans and objects, which amended to situations and people who are effected by.

This process was clearly seen in all successful teleworkers we interviewed in Telecapacitados: Although he could not explain clearly how they did it, nor knew how to teach others to do what they did, it was clear that there was a process of gathering what they could do with the computers and Internet, with a business proposal that someone bought and financed. This sense of comfort with the medium and its special missing in those who wished to telework and did not know how to do it. For there to be appropriated, there must be personal and organizational creativity.

Turning to another shared creative space, the team (researchers) we note how among the most committed members are developing a genuine interest and ability to learn from each other and create a joint product. Very different people, countries, professions, cultures, interests, health conditions and very different temperaments, they communicated with each other and created a joint production. One of the possible definitions of creativity is the association, combination, mixture of elements previously unconnected. The Web provides an extremely fertile field for these "remote associations"

The group closed to help in those moments when there were difficulties. There were also a couple of instances where the individual ego clearly conspiring against the whole, they were the least. We do not know enough of how to detect and avoid these situations, there's are lot about writing in reference to the work face, but for us to pioneer, writing and theorizing about leadership and their virtual avatars. In the best case, each of these processes of creation and knowledge generated trading strategies and became part of the group to be taken up in the future and put into practice for new problems. So, we've learned something in the process. This learning process is optimized if there are adequate tools for registration, which allows reuse as labor input materials generated.

4. Experience 5: Share experiences with other teleworkers

Within a non-formal environment and unrecorded, telecommuters, and other groups of people, share with other anxieties, joys and questions. We will try to summarize what we obtained from these exchanges, from the first moment when a teleworker is recognized as such until that point as it seeks to accomplish its task under the best conditions possible, looking in the mirror that is the other teleworkers to redefine our starting point: the teleworking with quality of life.

As noted, many teleworkers do not know they are, are entrepreneurs themselves, hustler, and creative daily. The creation of virtual communities where they learn about the strategies of others, recognized as part of a whole, share anxieties and joys, discover how to start or how to overcome bumps, is good for the quality of life in the working environment where the workspace is the home, managing our time is, when the working tool, in addition to the computer, it is our own body and when, moreover, we invent today what tomorrow will feed us.

These concerns reveal many aspiring teleworkers such. Sometimes occur in words, sometimes in silence, but also in the physical, tangible, living. The gesture of shaking the head, turn your shoulders, stretch, shake, to be removed from the body in the footsteps of so many hours sitting. The risk is to be so focused on the virtual that we forget our own bodies. We add, then, the concept of "efficient management of one's body" as a requirement for teleworking with quality of life. The status of person with disabilities often works as an amplifier, as magnifying glass, as the analyzer. We should pay more attention to our physicality, something changed or we have become used to ignore us to operate like the rest (if possible, better, what will they think of you if you do not.) This mechanism we have described elsewhere and "disembodiment". (It hurts but never mind) The difficulty of reconciling a high activity of eye, brain and fingers with a relative immobility is a turning point to all telecommuters.

In drafting this paper, we seek definitions of quality of life that we were helpful. No adapted exactly what we wanted to convey. Remember, then, that claim that technology, as one's health, it is silent when operating. The notice only when it fails. This "silence" is desirable, although not to be confused with train us not to listen. Nowadays there is a dialogue, almost heated discussion between my left leg, which strongly believes that release the keyboard and change position, and my brain, which is quite attuned to what I write and looking for the next word. A small displacement seems to have settled the question for a while. But how many times we choose to pretend that our backs and surrounding are not there while we work.

We know that in any work environment variables are absolutely beyond our control. Many have been demonized to telework as a new form of exploitation. However, there is much in what we can amend the bioethics of every day life. Some have been mentioned here.

*Adjustments in the home. Privacy.

*Ergonomic adaptations. Comfort

*Time management

*Negotiation processes with employers, colleagues and family group. Clarity and.

*consensus standards.

*Managing one's own body. Find ways to compensate themselves immobility.

*Peer support.

*Membership of virtual communities of teleworkers.

*When this is possible, choose the tools more accessible and usable.

* As a wish: working around people who valued us and making meaningful tasks