

# Remote working doesn't need to affect innovation, new research reveals

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Employees that work from home are unlikely to be less innovative, according to new research by the University of Cologne and the Leibniz University Hannover.

The study, conducted by professors Marina Schröder and Bernd Irlenbusch, found that video conferencing among team members can compensate possibly negative effects on innovation when employees work remote from each other.

Remote working can combine the best of both worlds – an increase in productivity as most employees have less distractions and high level of usefulness as video conferencing allows employees communicate as if they're in the office.

“Previous research has shown that creative performance is significantly lower when there is no face-to-face communication, however, the current lockdown has fostered the adoption of new technologies to conduct collaborative tasks when team members work from home. Video conferencing can mitigate the gap in creative performance,” says Professor Irlenbusch.

The study compared face-to-face communication, video conferencing and communicating over chat to see how remote working will affect creative performance. The results speak to the question of how organisations should design their communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings revealed that communicating over “chat” significantly reduced the usefulness of innovative ideas as well as the share of extremely innovative ideas often resulting in product breakthroughs. In these respects, face-to-face communication and video conferencing showed no differences.

“Innovation is rarely an individual task, it often needs team collaboration, which can be effected greatly by the current circumstances of everyone working remotely. Organisations need to enable their employees to communicate with the right media to get the best out of them,” says Professor Irlenbusch.

These insights come from the discussion paper: 'Innovation and communication media in virtual teams – An experimental study.' <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13218>

For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak to Professor Irlenbusch, contact Katie Hurley at BlueSky PR on [khurley@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:khurley@bluesky-pr.com) or call +44 (0) 7538412793.