

## Emailing on Train Commute Should 'Count as Working Day'

A new study suggests that the time employees spend checking and sending emails during their daily commute should be counted as work.

Researchers from the University of the West of England (UWE) analysed rail passengers' use of free WiFi on commuter routes between London and Birmingham and London and Aylesbury.

The survey of 5,000 passengers found that many used their journey to "catch up" with work before or after their working day. Interviews with respondents also revealed that a large number used this buffer period to, for example to move from being a parent getting children ready for school to their management role.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, WiFi use increased with the provision of faster WiFi speeds

The researchers looked to the example of Norway where some commuters can count travel as part of their working day.

The study highlighted that if travel time were to count as work time, there would be many social and economic impacts, as well as implications for the rail industry. Whilst it may ease commuter pressure on peak hours and allow for more comfort and flexibility around working times, it may also demand more surveillance and accountability for productivity.

The UWE team noted that, if employers were to consider commuters' journeys as part of the working day, train operators and telecoms industries would need to invest more money to improve working conditions, including tables, power sockets and continuous connectivity for internet access and phone calls.

Source: IOSH Magazine

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