The Need to Train and Educate Employees and Managers to Drive Self-Transformation and Disconnection From Digital Technology*

Francisco Trujillo Pons

(Predepartmental Unit for Labour, Social Security, and Ecclesiastical Law, Universidad Jaume I, Castellon, Spain)

Abstract: All workers, but especially managers in charge and managers, must be trained and made aware of the risks of computer fatigue and the need to exercise the right to digital disconnection. In this way, an important step will be taken to change the business culture and climate and thus promote the well-being of workers. If managers and managers hardly disconnect from technology, hardly will their collaborators. In short, both one and the other must be aware of the physical psychosocial risks of not disconnecting after a day's work or during permits, vacations or temporary disabilities. Without a doubt, the computer fatigue that the Spanish legislator incorporated at the end of 2018 is the most serious psychosocial risk that the position with command and the worker can suffer. To avoid it, training and awareness actions are essential to clarify the dangers of constant non-connectivity to digital and telematic media.

Key words: training, transformation, disconnection, digital, technology

JEL codes: I, J, K, L

1. Introduction: A New Framework in the Provision of Services

The technologies known as Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have completely transformed the way work is conducted and resources are managed at companies: they are key to optimising times and productivity.

The Internet is part of physical and digital offices and is commonly used by employees and middle management to search for information, communicate, and even learn (online training is quite powerful). As discussed, this does not only occur at physical offices but also remote work: companies also provide their employees with portable devices (laptops, smartphones, tablets etc.) when these employees regularly conduct their activity from outside the premises. In order to be able to work, they log into the ICT systems of their companies through telematic networks (as previously stated, VPN or cloud solutions are widely used to name a few). This service provision may be controlled or monitored by the company. Hence, the activity is registered to ensure that working hours are those agreed upon and to guarantee that the employee does not make excessive use of ICT at

Francisco Trujillo Pons, Ph.D., Predepartmental Unit for Labour, Social Security, and Ecclesiastical Law, Universidad Jaume I; research areas: labour, digital disconnection, work, companies, employees, law. E-mail: francisco.trujillo@uji.es.

work. However, working hours are exceeded on many occasions and workdays are extended (with no financial remuneration or rest periods) using other communications via email or phone messages: this is where the employee must have received great training and education so that they can say enough is enough and disengage electronically from work. This extension of the workday has been further strengthened by telework and COVID-19. The standardisation of this work modality may involve the assignment of more tasks and, consequently, it may eventually lead to working longer hours as opposed to before the pandemic.

This paradigm shift in the use of information made by entrepreneurs and employees in the digital era of the 21st century has given rise to the so-called 'Information Society', which not only affects employment relations, but also leisure and interpersonal relationships. In line with this new paradigm, and more precisely, due to the constant use of mobile phones, the "attention society" arises as well, also known as the "attention economy", in the sense that smartphones absorb their users for a lot of time and make people addicted to their vast content. These are ways of acting both in society and in companies which undoubtedly push for an oversized use of digital devices. The lockdown regime and the subsequent return to "normality" due to the global pandemic of COVID-19, together with the preponderance of remote work, e.g., its teleworking variant, has increased digital connectivity through the use of computers (with a constant flow of information through emails) and smartphones (through instant messaging programs such as WhatsApp).

Using statistical data from 2021, the INE (Spanish Institute of Statistics) itself, in its survey on equipment and ICT in households provides interesting data on the number of Spanish workers who used the teleworking modality. Three conclusions may be extracted from this report: (1) That 35% of the employed population from 16 to 74 years old were given the possibility of teleworking. That 17.7% were allowed to telework full-time and 17.3% only partially. Lastly, 17.6%, 12.2%, and 5.3% of the employed population teleworked; (2) 47.4% of the individuals who provided their services online did so every day, 17.8% between three and four days a week, 20.2% more than 1.5 days and less than three, and 14.7% less than 1.5 (or less than 30% of their workday). On average, 3.5 days per week and; (3) out of those who teleworked because the nature of their work allowed them to do so in full, 67.8% did so every day. The following employed individuals opted to telework every day: 65.0% as current workday, and 61.9% as an option once the pandemic was overcome. Likewise, the report covers the advantages of this modality highlighting the following: avoiding commuting (95.4%), management by the employee of their working time (87.3%), and work-family/personal life balance (87.2%). Conversely, the main disadvantages found were the absence of social interaction with colleagues (82.2%), the failure to disengage from work (60.8%), and the excessive workload (47.0%). This is a clear reflection of the paradox of telework, i.e.: on the one hand, it allows for work-personal/family life balance, and on the other hand, it increases the workload and makes digital disconnection more difficult during rest periods.

In this context of concern (said concern having reached supranational levels through an advanced legislative initiative in the shape of a European Directive), an urgent need arises to create new training in the workplace, not only for employees but also for middle management or managers who do not shy away from invading the personal rest space of their co-workers. This training should transform today's corporate cultures, which tend to arrange the workload in a way that exceeds the limits of the company's powers. So much so that many companies do not hesitate to sanction those who disengage from technology at the end of their workday. In this type of work environment, middle management relies on the work of their subordinates. Consequently, they may see digital disconnection as a hindrance to their work. The above tend to be individuals who base their management abilities on hierarchical figures and often lack the digital skills that could allow them to reach digital transformation. As a

result of this ineptitude, they are afraid of losing control over their employees and, consequently, they see phone calls as something ordinary, regardless of the hour of the day.

Indeed, organisational cultures speak volumes about the respect given to digital disconnection at work. As it has been affirmed, there are many companies with a culture that tends to encourage employees to remain constantly "ON", that is, constantly and permanently connected to their devices during rest periods (daily, weekly, vacation periods, leaves, etc.). They consider this as something positive for the work and to see an increase in productivity. Companies should not disseminate this idea nor create these habits in their employees considering the psycho-social risks they may generate. If this behaviour is maintained in time, employees seeking a promotion could eventually accept emails or calls outside working hours. As the damaged party, they should be the first to consider this corporate behaviour as an infringement of their right to privacy with a clear effect on their mental health and their personal/family life.

Consequently, middle management, and even top management, should receive training and gain awareness, mainly on the virtues of exercising the right to digital disconnection. The goal is to originate a change in the company's culture and background to enhance the well-being of employees. If management finds it difficult to disengage from technology, then employees themselves will find it yet more difficult to disengage from technology. In summary, both groups should learn about the physical and psychosocial risks of the failure to disengage after the workday or during work leaves, holidays, or temporary disability leaves. There is no doubt that computer fatigue, incorporated into Spanish law by Spanish legislators at the end of 2018, is the most serious psychosocial risk that managers and employees may face.

2. Training and Awareness Actions to Guarantee the Right to Digital Disconnection at Work

The employer, as the guarantor of the health and safety of its employees, has a broad-content duty to ensure general safety and must therefore assess technology and the physical, the mental and social impact it has on its personnel, among other aspects. Additionally, apart from adopting the necessary measures in this regard, be it in a secondary manner or specifically as part of its general duty, it also has an obligation to train its employees. Along that same line of reasoning, it should be emphasised that the employer has a duty to provide resources and not results, that is, it must do everything it can to prevent damage from occurring (an active, as opposed to reactive management of occupational risk prevention). When the duty to provide results comes into play, one tends to think of the employer's guilt "in eligendo" (the "guilt in the choice" that arises in terms of civil liability) for having chosen employees for activities that require the use of ICT without the proper training and for having put them in a detrimental position given the risk of eventual computer fatigue.

The employer's obligation to train its employees arises from Section 19 of Spanish Law 31/1995, of November 8, on Occupational Risk Prevention (LPRL in Spanish). From a legal point of view, this makes positive the need for training and awareness-raising actions to be incorporated in internal policies for digital disconnection or, subsidiarily, in collective agreements.

This obligation is a specification of Section 14.1 of the LPRL, Section 12 of the Framework Directive on Health and Safety at work (Directive 89/391/EEC[1]) and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981

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[1] Adopted in 1989, it was a fundamental milestone to improve in this area. The Directive guarantees a set of minimum health and safety requirements throughout Europe. Member States can then maintain those minimums or decide to apply more restrictive

(No. 155) of the ILO. Under this legal framework, the employer has an obligation to guarantee sufficient and adequate training for employees to protect them against occupational risks. The obligation not only refers specifically to those who perform specific prevention tasks (designated employees, prevention delegates, and representatives, according to sections 30 and 37 of the LPRL) but also to all employees concerning their job. This training must be conducted ad hoc to raise awareness among the entire workforce (employees and managers) about the healthy use of ICT to avoid computer fatigue. It must also meet the following requirements: the training must be sufficient and appropriate; theoretical, practical and dynamic: that is, included by the company from the beginning but also extended at a later time when functions are modified or there is a change in the job, or if the work teams or the conditions of the job change (for example, the incorporation of more digital and telematic devices that can affect work-personal and/or family life balance); it is an obligation to provide results and it must be personalised: the training content must be adapted to the characteristics of the employee and the position they perform, especially when it comes to particularly vulnerable employees (Sections 25 and 27 of the LPRL), as well as in the case of temporary employees, since this last group, being less qualified, and having less experience and a lesser level of integration in the company, tends to experience a greater rate of accidents.

In the case of employees contracted through a temporary staffing firm (Section 28.2 of the LPRL) the obligation to provide training lies with the temporary staffing firm, although it may lie with the company that has temporarily hired the employee if the need to train the employee is the result of a series of events occurred while the employee is at their service. In the case of contractors and subcontractors, the contractor must ensure that its subcontractors comply with this training requirement (Section 42.2 of the LPRL).

On a separate note, Spanish regulations do not specify the means or the persons that will carry out the training. In any event, all training will happen during working hours and will count as time at work (Section 19.2 of the LPRL). The employer will not be allowed to pass through to employees the costs arising out of the training. Indeed, training as an obligation is a burden that must be sustained by the employer (Section 14 of the LPRL), and failure to comply with this obligation is considered a serious or very serious infringement (Sections 12.8 and 13.4 of the Spanish Law on Labour Infringements and Sanctions, LISOS in Spanish, respectively).

Lastly, it should be noted that this obligation lies with employees as well (and not only with companies) and that they must necessarily cooperate to ensure the fulfilment of this duty by the company. Failure to do so and to share their legal knowledge on the use of ICT at work could consequently lead to sanctions. Additionally, they could likewise be awarded a sanction if they fail to abide by these security precepts, although for this situation to arise, employees must have previously received adequate and sufficient training, both at a theoretical and at a practice level (Section 29.2 LPRL).

The above are all aspects that must be taken into account while drafting the content of the disconnection policies of a company to ensure that all training actions meet the established criteria.

As it will be further analysed in this communication, this training and awareness is key to guaranteeing the exercise of what is known as the right to digital disconnection at work. The right to digital disconnection at work is a right incorporated into the Spanish legal system as a result of the publication of Organic Law 3/2018, of December 5, on the protection of Personal Data and the Guarantee of Digital Rights (hereinafter LOPDGDD). Regarding its content, it is worth highlighting Section 88 (digital disconnection), Section 91 (collective bargaining), Final Provision 13 (Section 20 bis of the Workers' Statute-ET-for employees of private companies)

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measures.

and Final Provision 14 thereof (Section 14 (j) bis for employees of state-owned companies).

As a consequence of COVID-19 and the subsequent rise of teleworking, this labour right was later reflected in Law 10/2021, of July 9, on Remote Work (hereinafter, LTD). Section 18 of this Law is mainly a reference to the aforementioned Section 88 of the LOPDPGDD.

Both the LOPDPGDD and the LTD require the employer, upon having heard the workers' representatives, to draw up an internal policy aimed at workers, including those who hold managerial positions. This internal policy must include training and awareness-raising actions for the staff on the reasonable use of technological tools to avoid the risk of computer fatigue.

In this sense, the company's duty to ensure the right to disconnection involves a limitation on the use of technological means for business and work communications during rest periods, as well as compliance with the maximum duration of the workday and any limits and precautions regarding working hours provided by the applicable legal or contractual regulations. Subject to this fundamental principle, since December 2018, companies, regardless of their size or whether they are state-owned or private, must have an internal digital disconnection policy (upon prior hearing of the workers' representatives), and integrate the aforesaid policy into their training plans. This policy needs to be able to normalise positive behaviours at work, for example, through the conduction of actions to raise awareness among employees. These training and awareness-raising actions regarding the right to disconnect from work through managing and respecting the working time are essential to guarantee a correct exercise of said right and, above all, to ensure compliance with this right within the labour sphere. From this perspective, collective bargaining agreements that regulate behaviour protocols are essential to guarantee that employees digitally disconnect from their work.

All these actions must be aimed at both employees and middle management, but also top management. The actions must likewise provide solutions, activities, and guidelines regarding individual behaviours. The digital revolution is here to stay, and companies must adapt as quickly as possible. This involves adapting to digital devices and always respecting the well-being of the employees. If companies fail to provide training or awareness-raising actions to avoid computer fatigue, they will not transform at the pace that is being demanded by the current labour market.

These training actions and business actions must lead to the acknowledgement of the right to digital disconnection, all the more considering this is a matter of urgent need. So much so that, according to statistical data, the majority of the active population, that is, 88% in 2020 (89% in 2019) believes that the right should exist to digital disconnection. And a worrying percentage, only 36% in 2020 (37% in 2019), affirm that their company recognises their right to digital disconnection. The survey concludes that, during 2020, the year when remote work increased exponentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the necessary advances in the right to digital disconnection at work remained to be made yet.

To change this perspective, it does not suffice for the company to issue a declaration of intentions stating that the company's culture is based on the well-being of the employee and on the company's respect for the employee's right to rest; education in this regard is essential. This education must transform employees and change their expectations about the response they will receive if they show an iron will to disconnect from technology during their rest periods.

These training and awareness actions should focus on the correct use of ICT to avoid the psychosocial risks of technostress or computer fatigue. There should be training and awareness-raising actions in place that take into special consideration the situation of employees who carry out their provision of services remotely. The situation

should also be considered of certain employees who may present difficulties at the time to absorb the knowledge acquired in the training and awareness-raising processes on the healthy use of ICT (cognitive problems, disabilities, etc.). Thus, training actions must be ad hoc and consider the ages of the employees, their generations, their sector (primary, secondary or tertiary), their profession, their possible cognitive difficulties, etc. Such training, professional learning and awareness-raising actions addressed to employees and managers may be conducted either remotely or at the workplace. In any case, these actions must be considered effective working time and cannot take place during overtime or days off without adequate compensation. These training and awareness activities can be very varied. However, they must offer individual, common and homogeneous solutions and behavioural patterns for all involved. As it has been emphasised, to be effective, training and awareness activities have to encourage appropriate and efficient use of ICT so that poor management and poor use of digital devices do not translate into episodes of stress and computer fatigue among employees.

The training content can be very varied. An example of this, one that many companies should specify in their training or awareness courses on the use of ICT, is the possibility offered by email managers (Gmail, Outlook, etc.) to add away messages to the signatures of the e-mails or by using messaging applications such as WhatsApp (a typical away message could read as follows:) "I'm on vacation and will be back on X", "I'm on a sick leave and plan to return on X", etc.). There are six steps[2] that may be followed to send a message to anyone who contacts the employee outside working hours.

Regarding the correct use of ICT, as it has been stated, digital education is necessary. However, this education must not discriminate between ages or conditions. For example, on the reasonable use of digital media, it should be emphasised that no employee is without the risk of experiencing computer fatigue at some point. Training on the specific technologies that are being used by each company for communications or meetings with their employees is also recommended. This further avoids generational clashes regarding the use of ICT. The so-called "digital natives"[3] tend to manage technological tools (use of Skype, Teams, Zoom, etc.) better than 'digital immigrants. Specifically, young people feel the need for permanent connectivity, as they are living in a society invaded by information and technology in all areas.

Of course, the technological transformation that companies are undergoing makes the presence of these "digital" employees necessary, as they can use digital media to interact with each other internally and, externally, with customers and suppliers. Indeed, the work interests of young people point in this direction; In Spain, according to recent studies[4], when choosing and accepting the company they are going to work for, these "digital

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[2] WhatsApp FAQ (2020).

The steps to set up an away message are: 1) Tap the Menu button > Settings > Company settings > Away message. 2) Turn on Send away message. 3) Tap on the message to edit it > OK. 4) In the Hours section, tap and choose from these options: - Always send, to send an automated message at all times. - Custom schedule, to send an automated message only during a specific period. - Outside of business hours, to send an automated message only outside of business hours (this option is only available if business hours are set in the business profile). 5) Select one of these options from the recipient list: - Everyone, to send a message to everyone who sends you a message outside of business hours. - Those who are not in your contact book, to send a message to all the contacts that you do not have saved in your contact book. - All except..., to send a message to all contacts except a few specific ones. - Send only to...., to send a message to specific contacts. 6) Touch Save. Important: Away messages are only sent when the phone has an active Internet connection.

[3] A person who, due to their youth, has lived with ICT and handles it naturally and spontaneously without problems. In contrast, a "digital immigrant" is a person born and educated before the rise of said ICT. Consequently, they experience greater shocks while using said ICT. They come from the "millennial" generation.

[4] According to Deloitte and its report entitled "The Deloitte Millennial Survey" (2020), 75% of the workforce will be made up of digital natives, and 64% of "millennials" value having the flexibility to work from any location. These data once again highlight beyond any doubt the need to regulate digital disconnection in the workplace with full guarantees.

native" employees value flexible hours, work-life balance, and "smart working" to provide services from home and from anywhere. This generalised training for any employee regardless of their digital skills, which can be considered from a business perspective, has to advocate what is known as 'slow communication', a theory based on a reassessment of the physical world and its attributes as opposed to the online environment, all this to put technology at the service of mankind. This way, individuals gain control over their life and can take better advantage of the messages and content of both their digital and face-to-face communications. As a result of the above, training must be provided so that employees regularly incorporate disconnections into their work routine and favour personal communication. Thus, a new leisure is developed in the workplace that dispenses with digital technologies and re-establishes the boundaries between work time and rest time.

In this field, to eradicate this digital gap and guarantee that all employees have equal opportunities at the time to manage ICT and access technological jobs, the 24th collective bargaining agreement for the banking sector (BOE May 30, 2021) should be mentioned. Its content is very significant given that, in order to eradicate the digital divide and guarantee the employability of employees, Section 4 thereof includes the following literal wording*:* "Companies undertake to train their staff in the digital skills and abilities necessary to face the digital transformation, thus enabling their digital reconversion and adaptation to new jobs, as well as helping them avoid and eradicate digital gaps and guaranteeing their employability. For their part, employees must participate in this type of training activities for the sake of their career advancement and ongoing updating".

Lastly, the report produced by the BBVA Foundation should be highlighted by way of recommendation to develop specific training that pursues this equality and breaks the digital divide, as well as for employees to acquire educational knowledge in the use of ICT. This report analyses the different attitudes that Spanish society adopted towards ICT during the pandemic.

3. Software Available to Employees and Companies

In the current framework of labour relations, where a permanent connectivity regime has been established, many employees suffer from nomophobia, that is, the irrational fear of spending a period of time without a digital device (above all, mobile phones).

Companies have to eradicate these behaviours, but of course, employees have to do their part as well given the occupational risks that they may eventually face from a mental health perspective.

To avoid this negative phenomenon, there has been a proliferation of digital devices that show the amount of time the user has spent using them and establish activity time limits on some applications. Technology-based companies that create computer applications available to employers and employees are an important step towards efficiency and a real exercise of the right to digital disconnection.

By way of evidence of the above, we can cite two technological solutions available to companies. The first one is the EffiWork application developed by the company WorkMeter which, among other features, includes very interesting content for the well-being of employees. Once this option is activated, it warns the employee that they have been in front of the screen for too long and invites them to take a break to rest their eyes or move around the room to loosen up their muscles. In this fashion, it is disconnected and can be activated again to resume its tasks with full performance: one more application in the market that favours the application of the right to digital disconnection, since it respects rest and availability times. Indeed, in its "Today" panel, said application allows the employee to view the variations and incidents of their workday in real-time. Thus, if an employee is attending a

video call, on leave from work, taking a break, or simply not connected, thanks to this information provided by the system, the employee's hierarchical superior or manager receives this information on their device and becomes aware that they should not bother the employee, as they are exercising their right to technological rest.

Lastly, the second one, the one provided by the company Aiwin, is called "On/Off" and allows for the maintenance of productivity in hybrid work models through digital disconnection and well-being. With this computer application, companies can manage hyperconnection and its consequences to improve well-being and work productivity. As shown in its guide, through "On/Off" employees can become aware of how certain habits of their day-to-day work impact their well-being, thus allowing them to develop the necessary behaviours to manage the consequences of said habits, as well as to be more productive and feel committed in this new work environment dominated by digitisation. This is yet one more step in providing a training and awareness solution regarding digital disconnection, health and well-being so that entrepreneurs can face various daily-life situations in person, as permitted by these digitised applications.

A series of innovative measures in digital devices to curb this digital overactivity of employees. The practical application of these limitations to connectivity is a matter of great concern in the current environment of labour relations. Technology must prove it can provide solutions that guarantee the well-being of employees, all while allowing companies to comply with their regulatory obligations regarding digital disconnection. The software available to companies and workers must allow the activation of automatic digital disconnection systems, with different options, namely, among others, notifying the employee that the end of their day has come and forcing the closing of the employee's applications. In short, with these technological measures, the long-awaited 'digital detox' is pursued, considered a phenomenon to get society to digitally detoxify and disconnect from technological devices. This is a very recent trend but one that is likely to increase in the short and medium term.

Among the different solutions existing, other than computer solutions, a very simple practice that the employee can follow is trying to make reasonable use of their iOS devices (iPhone, iPad and iPod touch), in particular with its 'do not disturb' function. This function may be activated from System Settings (at that moment an icon of a crescent moon will appear in the status bar), and the employee can configure their system through three options. Firstly, by indicating a period of time in which calls and notifications will be silenced; that is, indicating the end of the workday (for example, 7:00 p.m.) and its start (for example, 8:00 a.m.). It is not an absolute measure, but rather, certain exceptions can be made both for certain people and for repeated calls (for urgent matters that may occur in the workplace, such as urgent orders, fires, etc.) that may occur within thirty minutes.

This way, the employee can configure the system so that the call can enter without being silenced from their mobile phone or tablet. Secondly, the 'do not disturb' function also allows the employee to schedule a downtime or rest time. Obviously, the schedule should be for every day and not just for weekdays. On Saturdays and Sundays, the range of inactivity should be wider to guarantee the employee's uninterrupted weekly rest of one and a half days (Section 37 ET). During this time, the employee can block the corporate applications, although they can leave available the applications of their choice. And, thirdly, any user of the Apple brand through their iOS system can configure the usage limit per application (for example, instant messaging or corporate email synchronised to their mobile phone and tablet) and the communication limit for work contacts.

In accordance with the iOS system, version 15 was launched for mobile phones (iPhone), tablets (iPadOS 15) and computers (macOS Monterey) at the end of September 2021. It allows the employee to disconnect from work by configuring concentration modes that allow the employee to limit the entry of work notifications outside

business hours. In this sense, we find the "Concentration" option, which adds flexibility in the shape of modes, among which the 'Work' option stands out to avoid distractions and limit certain Apps[5] (such as WhatsApp notifications) and calls from contacts, etc.

In other words, the 'Work Mode' feature allows certain important people or Apps to send the user notifications when they are working and mutes the others across all their devices. Thus, it constitutes an important advance towards dignified employment and digital disconnection by allowing the work mode to be activated at a specific time or location, or when using certain Apps.

4. Conclusions

Very soon, the right to digital disconnection will have relevance not only at an EU level but also worldwide (many countries, such as Portugal and Belgium recently, are already regulating it and others have very advanced proposals, such as Chile) precisely because the digital transformation of companies is immense; this digital use at work is further promoted in these times of COVID-19 as a result of a lack of activity in places with face-to-face interactions. It goes without saying that this right is aimed at the management of certain types of sectors and companies, that is, those that are more digitised (those which provide digital solutions; However, said digital transformation, which is global and does not limit itself to certain sectors, also causes a shift in jobs that have always been provided in physical centres and are now being provided remotely.

Digital technology is transforming professional relationships, making employees more connected, informed and productive. This transformation is driven by data: vast amounts of information that create knowledge and personalised experiences. However, this digital revolution must always be favourable for workers and not entail a recess in labour law. It can only be successful if people trust technology and know that information, as well as being confidential, can only be processed for work purposes and, therefore, during working times. Break times must not be violated by digital technology. And this can only be achieved if there is trust and respect. Thus, training, education and awareness at an organisational level are key.

This constant connectivity, viewed as a problem to be solved, is not detrimental to the new job skills required from employees. Accordingly, digital competence is a basic and necessary competence in the current labour market. In line with this professional training, which will be basic in the short term, one of the strategic axes of the

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[5] Along the same lines, taking into account the widespread use of WhatsApp, small practical training activities can also be used. Thus, when it is certain that WhatsApp is going to be used for professional purposes (clients, work groups of colleagues and superiors, etc.) the employee should change their status to "Absent" at the end of their workday using the App configuration. In the same way, the employee can modify their instant messaging application so that the proverbial 'two blue check marks' do not appear warning that the person who has received the communication has read the message. In this case, the employee has opened WhatsApp and has seen that conversation on their mobile or computer screen (there is the option of having WhatsApp linked in the computer browser -WhatsApp Web-). This way, to ensure digital disconnection at work and avoid the temptation to reply to a WhatsApp message because the employee has entered the conversation and their contact (who may be their boss or immediate superior) now knows that the employee has read it because the two blue check marks have appeared, the employee can disable read receipts. These steps can be taken to further protect the employee's privacy by not reporting when they read or stop reading messages sent to them. Following what was indicated above, the instant messaging service would be equated to email. Therefore, by executing this option, WhatsApp would become an asynchronous and non-synchronous medium, thus breaking the expectation of a response and the fatigue and sense of urgency that the employee may eventually experience. This is an option that can be a relief for many employees who, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and teleworking, have witnessed how WhatsApp has gone from being an instant messaging application between friends and family to becoming yet another tool for the work environment. The application is now being used as some sort of professional email, and the abundant messages that employees receive can considerably increase the levels of stress of these employees because of their unanswered messages. Indeed, this is a very important function; if the read receipt is always enabled, the employee is always tempted and experiences an urge to answer, precisely because they know that their superior or boss has read the communication and is waiting for an immediate reply.

"2025 Spanish Digital Agenda" drawn up by the Government consists in "*reinforcing the digital skills of workers and citizens as a whole. Special emphasis will be placed on the needs of the labour market and on closing the digital divide in education. The goal is that by 2025, 80% of people, half of them women have basic digital skills*". But, as stated, such competence in the use of ICT must not be excessive nor disproportionate. Thus, in 2007 the Council and the European Parliament established the European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Among them is the so-called digital competence, which is defined as the competence that 'involves the safe and critical use of information society technologies for work, leisure and communication'. It is indicated that the necessary skills are searching, obtaining and processing information; using it in a discerning and systematic manner; using tools to produce, present and understand complex information; using technology in support of critical thinking, creativity and innovation. This competence requires a critical and reflective attitude and is also based on an interest in participating in communities and networks for cultural, social or professional purposes.

In short, as previously demonstrated, companies established in Spain must design and apply a digital disconnection protocol in the workplace and, additionally, carry out actions that promote a culture of respect for employees' free time. The owners of the business, the people in charge, the people in command, top management and middle management, that is, all those who are above the employees, are the first that need to behave appropriately inside the company. Likewise, in line with the digital transformation of their companies, they must use ICT simply for professional purposes and never for personal purposes. They must also respect the employees' breaks. To that end, training and educating these groups is essential to changing a corporate culture that may initially not consider employee breaks, so that it becomes a corporate culture with values, visions, and missions aimed at the well-being of employees.

It must be exercised to guarantee employee rest. Companies must have an employee-oriented culture and promote healthy habits so that employees do not become digital slaves. As a first step, people must be educated on the severity that a lack of rest may entail from a psychosocial perspective. Then, training actions must be organised, and awareness must be raised on labour law. If the company needs to assign tasks in times of non-connectivity for the employee over their agreed workday, these tasks must be paid as overtime.

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