

# Time to Telework

New technologies empower teleworkers like never before.



## GSA Touts Telework

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) believes in telework. That's why it's leading by example, increasing its own telework efforts while encouraging other federal agencies to do the same. Under the agency's telework policy, GSA helps government agencies find the best-value products and services they need to serve the public. GSA recently announced its new telework policy as it continues to sing the praises of telework to other government agencies.

"What we want to do in GSA is to demonstrate to the entire government that telework is a winner," said Bill Kelly, GSA's special assistant to the administrator for telework matters. "Telework, from our perspective, can have many positive effects."

GSA is deploying 5,000 more laptops this year as it gets more of its own employees teleworking. GSA is also making it mandatory for supervisors and other employees to take a telework training module. It's also working on a white paper it will share with other government agencies. GSA also plans to step up its marketing efforts to let more people know about the benefits of telework.

GSA itself is aiming for those benefits, including making itself an attractive place to work. It also uses telework for better continuity of operations, more productivity, less energy consumption and reduced need for office space. GSA wants to be among the best employers in federal government, and sees telework as a means to that end.

For agencies wanting to start their own telework programs, Kelly said four key elements need to be in place: strong leadership support; trust between supervisors and employees; a focus on production, outcome and results; and using technology well to stay connected with other team members.

Kelly noted that focusing on results is the best approach; managers who focus on line-of-sight forms of management — watching workers themselves — are missing the point.

Kelly is such a believer in telework that he postponed his planned retirement to help lead the cause. "I think the nature of work and the nature of man are more in sync when telework is put into the equation," he said.

He believes it makes sense to give an agency's most valuable asset — its people — the freedom and trust to work from home because it makes those people happier and more productive. Although there is still work to be done in spreading the word, Kelly is finding that more and more people agree with him.



It's time to rethink the traditional office. These days, the office can be anywhere — and often should be. With numerous advances in technology, it makes more sense than ever before to have employees avoid the commute and work from home.

Mobility is key as workers, empowered by the latest technological advances, can stay connected and be productive far away from the office. With less time spent driving to and from work, employees can spend more time actually working. Technology has caught up, making it possible for telecommuters to be just as productive, if not more so, than they would be if they were at the office.

Many workers now expect telework to be an option if an organization is serious about hiring them. "In the 21st century, fewer employees will be content driving 60 minutes from one computer screen to another," said Nigel Ballard, federal marketing manager of Intel. The computer at home can be just as productive as the one at the office, and it takes just seconds to get to it.

There are no excuses for government to be behind the times. The technology is available and affordable. Powerful, fast, cost-effective notebooks can now be securely managed from the home office, no matter where they are. And wireless broadband access makes it easy to connect from more locations.

There's plenty of evidence that telework increases productivity and results in happier, more loyal employees. Employers see many benefits too, including better continuity of operations (COOP). With its people already comfortable working from afar, a government agency set up for telework is better prepared for emergencies.

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### Powerful Machines

Intel® Centrino® 2 with vPro™ technology is providing a better telework experience by improving performance and manageability. Centrino 2 processor technology is designed specifically for mobile computing. It gives notebooks unprecedented performance capabilities. It enables faster, more powerful multitasking and improved high-definition visuals. It has the latest and greatest wireless connectivity. It also helps provide the longest possible battery life and enables lighter notebook design. Centrino 2 also has high-bandwidth Wi-Fi.

Intel vPro processor technology provides improved proactive security and remote management capabilities. It helps organizations lower the cost of managing notebooks while providing better protection for them.

An IT administrator can manage thousands of notebooks in thousands of homes or other locations. The administrator can see and fix security issues on a machine that's dozens of miles away. "He doesn't





have to leave his seat, and he has control of that machine,” Ballard said. Previously the computer had to be onsite and the technician often had to make a desk-side visit to fix a problem. With Intel vPro processor technology, issues can be handled remotely at a fraction of the cost.

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### Better Than Ever

Notebooks are capable of more than ever before. That’s one reason U.S. sales of notebooks could surpass desktops for the first time in 2008. “That tells you that the old paradigm — of the person schlepping in to sit at a great big, lumbering desktop machine — is now going away,” said Ballard. That’s because the old machine that’s been sitting on that desk for the last four years uses too much energy and works too slowly.

With a new notebook, employees can run the same applications, and faster. And they’ll see many personal benefits from teleworking. By not driving to work as often, employees save money on gas and insurance. With less wear and tear on their cars, they save on depreciation and maintenance. Their quality of life also improves because they spend less time in traffic.

Employees often feel a new sense of loyalty and trust when they can work from home, and are happier about the organization they work for. And many of them use the extra time to do more work.

There are also benefits for employers, who often report increased productivity and better job performance. And they’re certainly better prepared for disasters that could keep employees away from the office. Employers also spend less on heating and cooling since there are fewer people in the office.

The environment also wins. There’s less wear on roads, less traffic congestion and fewer pollutants in the air. Newer notebooks also use less energy than old desktop computers. With tangible benefits in all these areas, it’s a sound technology investment to buy new notebooks and get rid of old desktops.

### The Best Employees

Telework is also a huge aid to government in recruiting and retaining new employees. The recruiting process is now more critical for government than it’s ever been before. With baby boomers rapidly approaching retirement, governments everywhere need to replace those workers — and soon. For most young people entering the job market, the private sector is the first place they look.

“An enterprise is really only as good as its employees, and you’re basically competing with private enterprise to attract and retain a



world-class work force,” said Ballard. Job seekers want to know whether a position is telework-enabled. If it’s not, many will look elsewhere.

Having a telework program also helps employers retain their employees. Without it, people are more likely to keep their eyes open for other opportunities. “As soon as they get comfortable, they start looking for the same kind of job that you’ve trained them to do, that’s twice as close to where they live,” Ballard said.

### Better Preparedness

While telework proficiency is a positive, it can also help government be better prepared for emergency situations when workers can’t make it to the office. In the event of a natural disaster, terrorist act, influenza pandemic or other emergency, governments must continue to function and provide services for the public. Continuity of operations during these times is critical.

Intel’s Ballard gave a good example of how telework can save the day. “You’re sipping your coffee in the morning; you flick on CNN; you’re just about to put your tie on and head to the office,” he said. “You see guys in spacesuits putting HAZMAT tape around a building, which looks remarkably like the federal agency you were just about to commute to.

The problem is, you're here, and your old-paradigm desktop machine is in that building."

Government needs to see the teleworker and the COOP-equipped worker as the same thing. And it needs to be ready now. "It is absolutely no use planning to do something the day after something bad happens," said Ballard. "You need to be prepared beforehand."

With notebooks equipped with Intel Centrino 2 with vPro technology, agencies are set up for telework and COOP, and they're also going green as workers use energy-efficient notebooks from home.

### Studies Show Savings

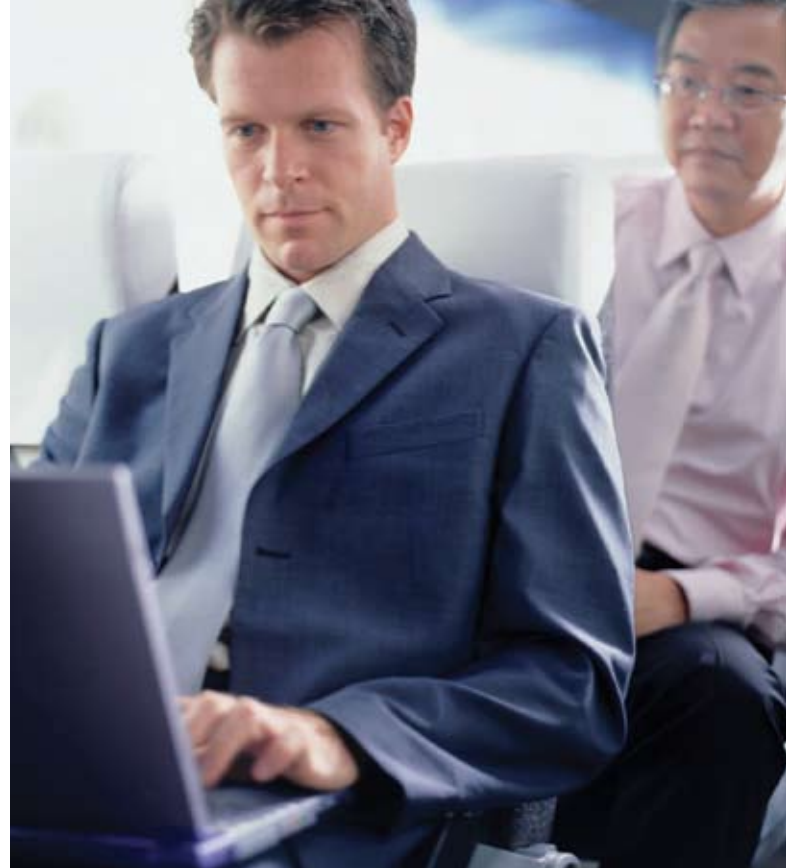
Plenty of research demonstrates telework's effectiveness. A study was released in March 2008 by the National Science Foundation, an independent federal agency, and Telework Exchange, a public-private partnership focused on telework. The study describes telework as a "win-win-win for managers, employees and the environment."

Eighty-seven percent of managers participating said employees' productivity increases or remains the same while teleworking. The study also found that the majority of those who manage teleworkers do not find it difficult to evaluate them. Those managers also said telework requires minimal to no change in how work is done. Telework Exchange also noted that if federal government employees teleworked two days per week, they would each reclaim 62 hours of their lives and would save \$1,201 per year. An employee could save more than \$9,000 per year in commuting costs alone by teleworking full-time.

The U.S. General Services Administration's *Telework Technology Cost Study*, done in 2006, found that the benefits of investing in telework far outweigh the costs. The return on investment in the first year can be as high as 1,500 percent, according to the study. The study also shows that the cost of the technology required to enable significant telework expansion is a small fraction of a typical annual IT budget.

### No Waiting

The federal government is increasing its commitment to telework. The trend is expected to find its way to state and local government too. Georgia and Atlanta are recognized for their strong telework initiatives. Many predict that government will increasingly use telework as part of its normal activities.



### For more information on the benefits of telework:

[www.teleworkexchange.com](http://www.teleworkexchange.com)

[www.telework.gov](http://www.telework.gov)

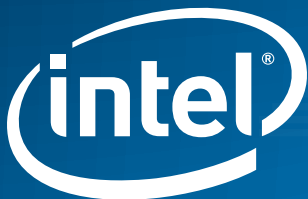
[www.workingfromanywhere.org](http://www.workingfromanywhere.org)

[www.gsa.gov/telework](http://www.gsa.gov/telework)

[www.cleanaircampaign.com](http://www.cleanaircampaign.com)

Intel Centrino 2 makes telework that much more attractive. With the powerful tool, employees can be more productive from home. And IT staff still has control of the computers.

Everyone today can buy what they need for teleworking. There are no more barriers. The only thing that can hold it back is a hesitant manager trying to impede progress. Still, telework figures to win. It makes sense for the future — and for the present.



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