



Everything DiSC® Pulse: Technology in the Workplace

Here's the scenario: A former coworker and his wife are preparing to move to California. The one obstacle was selling their house — fast. They did what anyone would do: they posted on Facebook, blogged, and tweeted. Of course, they also got a realtor, listed their house, and created a virtual tour (does anyone have open houses anymore?). They regularly updated the status of their house, so that everyone would know it was still on the market. So, what does this have to do with training?

With all of the technology out there designed to create informal online learning communities, do you ever wonder what's actually getting used for work? We did. We surveyed 2,742 recent training participants about their use of various technologies for work. We were curious not only what people were using, but what they were using it for. The most frequently used technologies were not surprising: the telephone and the internet (including search engines and specific webpages). Both were highest in overall use and for specific usage, including:

- Researching a specific topic
- Managing people more effectively (none of the technologies scored very high for frequency of use when managing people)
- Maintaining or finding contacts within your industry
- Building expertise in a particular area
- Solving customer-related problems or issues
- Working on routine projects

So, how did the new technologies fare? Coming in at number three were electronic knowledge bases, including Wikis and company data bases, with 53 percent of people saying they used them frequently for work. Not surprisingly, electronic knowledge bases were used most often for research and building expertise.

After electronic knowledge bases, frequency of use drops dramatically. In a distant fourth was internet or web meeting tools. Only 22 percent of people said they used these technologies frequently. But as a training organization, the number-five slot surprised us most of all. Only 16 percent of people reported using distance learning tools frequently. In our organization, rarely a day goes by that we aren't hosting a teleclass or webinar. Not surprising was what people reported using these tools for: gaining expertise and research.

So, what were the three technologies least used for work purposes? Social networking tools, like Facebook, Twitter, and Linked-In (#6); On-demand video or podcasts, including organization libraries and YouTube (tied for #7); and Online discussion groups, like blogs or the old list-servs (tied for #7).

Does the relatively low usage rate for these Web 2.0 technologies mean that they have no role in the workplace? Not at all. But it does mean that there's a huge opportunity for growth here. While only 12 percent of people surveyed said they used social networking frequently for work purposes, 18 percent said they use it for finding or maintaining contacts. And while only 7 percent of people said they used online discussion groups

Originally published in Training magazine.

For more information, contact Inscape Publishing at 763.765.2263 or media@inscapedublishing.com.

© 2009 Inscape Publishing Inc. All rights reserved.



frequently, that number jumps to 16 percent for use when building expertise in a particular area. As technologies evolve and grow, people continue to find new uses or ways to use them for work.

FYI, our former coworker and his wife sold their house. Do you know the one thing he didn't do? Pick up the phone and tell anyone he was moving. We read about it on Facebook.

About the authors

Mark Scullard is the director of research at Inscape Publishing, a leading provider of training materials for the corporate market. He has over a decade of research and data analysis experience in the development of psychological evaluation tools and methods. Mark received his doctorate in psychology from the University of Minnesota, with a supporting program in statistics.

Jeffrey Sugerman is the president and CEO of Inscape Publishing. He has over 20 years of experience in senior management, marketing and business development in the technology, training and publishing industries. Jeff holds doctorate and master's degrees in psychology from Washington University in St. Louis, and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Northwestern University.