THE NEW NORMAL IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FOR REMOTE WORKERS

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COVID-19 has disrupted the traditional work environment and upended lives around the globe for all kinds of organizations and their employees. In the face of this pandemic, remote work has become the new normal as people have learned to merge together their homes and personal lives with their work environments. Our work seeks to understand this new environment that people cohabit along with their families who are learning and working remotely – all within the shared home environment. Our findings shed a light on the challenges imposed by COVID-19 from the perspective of employees, parents and businesses. For this paper, graduate professors at a single business school institution in the south-central United States surveyed six hundred graduate business students. The survey response rate was approximately 19%. Below, a summary of the top findings related to working from home (WFH) from the survey is presented.

- **WFH status before COVID-19**: Prior to COVID-19, around half of the respondents (48.5%) did not work from home.
- **The home office**: About a fifth of the respondents (19.8%) had three or more members at home, while they were working from home.
- **Employee self-perception of productivity:** Approximately 40% of respondents (41.6%) reported being more productive while working from home, and 36% of respondents reported the same productivity at home and work.
- **Wish list:** The top resource required for employees working from home was a faster Internet connection.
- **Secure networks:** More than half of the respondents (55%) had a VPN to connect to their employer's network.
- **Post- COVID expectation of WFH status:** Employees would prefer to continue working from home. 52% of people would like to continue working from home at least 3-4 days a week, compared to 20% of respondents who were ready to be back in the office.
- **Post-COVID Prediction of WFH status:** A quarter of all respondents predicted that their employers would not allow them to work from home after COVID-19.

The findings of our paper provide timely insights about the challenges and opportunities of remote work induced by a pandemic, and discusses the implications of remote work for cybersecurity and employee productivity.