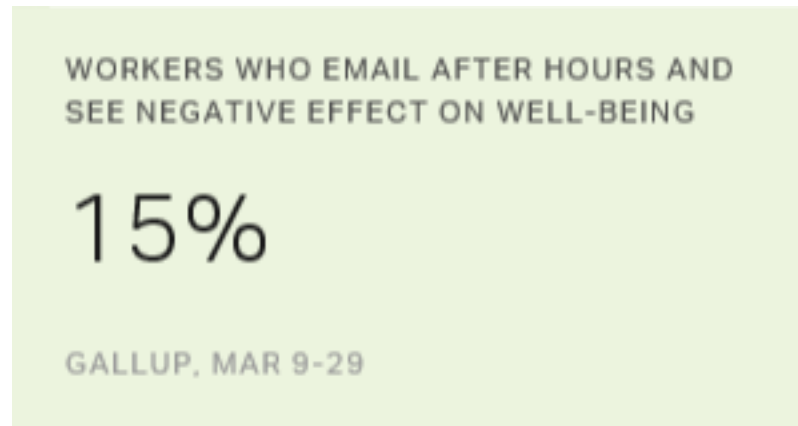


Email Outside of Working Hours Not a Burden to US Workers

May 10, 2017

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/210074/email-outside-working-hours-not-burden-workers.aspx>



by [Frank Newport](#)

Story Highlights

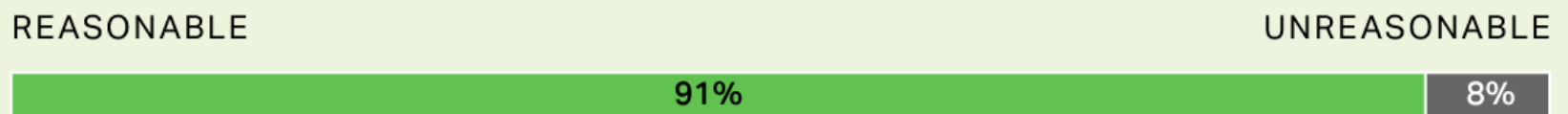
- 91% who email outside of working hours say amount is reasonable
- Most say after-hours emailing doesn't affect their well-being
- After-hours emailing not seen as important for advancement

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Checking email outside of normal business hours does not appear to be a burden for U.S. workers. About six in 10 workers say they check email outside of normal business hours. Of these, few claim the amount of emails they have to respond to during off hours is unreasonable, or that it negatively affects their personal well-being or relationships with friends and family.

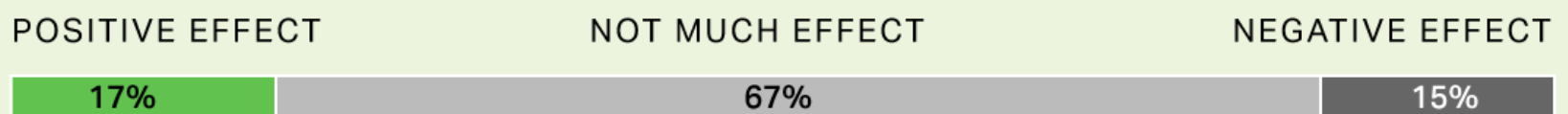
Little Evidence of Negative Impact From Email Outside of Normal Working Hours

Based on those who check work email outside of normal working hours

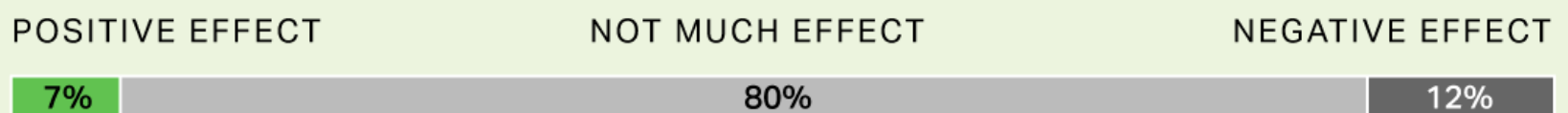
Amount of emails you have to respond to outside of normal working hours is reasonable or unreasonable



Effect of checking work email outside of normal working hours on personal well-being



Effect of checking work email outside of normal working hours on relationships with family and friends



GALLUP, MARCH 9-29, 2017

Less than a third of employees who check email outside of normal working hours say their ability to get their job done would suffer if they quit doing it. Additionally, of those who use email at work, just 21% say it is extremely or very important to check email outside of normal working hours in order to advance, get promoted and get ahead at their company.

Results are based on interviews conducted March 9-29 with more than 800 adults who work either full or part time for an employer.

Checking email outside of normal working hours has been an issue in France, which recently passed a law requiring employers with 50 or more employees to develop policies allowing workers the right to disconnect from email after hours.

After-work emails have been called a "national epidemic" in Canada, and some companies and government agencies in Canada, Germany and Brazil

have taken steps to curtail emailing outside of normal working hours.

When asked about the French law, described as giving "employees in larger companies the right to disconnect from email and other digital communication outside of normal working hours," six in 10 U.S. workers say they would favor that type of law in the U.S. However, workers who already use email frequently outside of normal working hours are the least likely to favor such a law.

Four in 10 U.S. Workers Don't Use Work Email Outside of Business Hours

The impact of email is not an issue to the one-quarter of American workers who say that they don't have access to work email to begin with. Of the three-quarters of workers (74%) who have an email account for work, 15% say they never check it outside of normal working hours. That leaves 59% who both have a work-related email and say they check it outside of normal working hours, even if just rarely.

The American Workforce and Email

	%
Don't have access to work email	26
Have work email but never check it outside of normal working hours	15
Have work email and check it rarely outside of normal working hours	12
Have work email and check it occasionally outside of normal working hours	20
Have work email and check it frequently outside of normal working hours	27
Gallup, March 9-29, 2017	

Workers who check email outside of normal working hours say they either just glance at it to see if anything important has come up, or read it but only respond to critical things until returning to work. That leaves one in five workers (21%) who report checking email outside of normal working hours and reviewing and responding to it the same way they would during normal working hours.

Even among those who frequently check email outside of working hours, only 11% say the amount of emails they have to respond to during that time is unreasonable. Most also say that using email outside of work doesn't have much of an effect on their personal well-being or relationships with friends or family.

Bottom Line

Overall, these results suggest that email use outside of normal working hours isn't a burden on most U.S. workers at this point. It is possible that U.S. workers accept checking email at night and on weekends as a part of their job -- possibly more so than workers in other countries -- or that workers enjoy their job and find it pleasurable to remain connected regardless of normal working hours. For others, email traffic may be limited enough on nights and weekends that it isn't a problem.

This new research builds on previous Gallup research showing that workers felt the [ability to work outside of normal business hours](#) was positive. But that study also found that those who checked emails outside of work experienced the most stress.

In the previous research, the increased stress associated with email use outside of work was correlational, based on the relationship between measures of daily stress and email use outside of work. In the current study, workers were asked directly about the impact of email use outside of normal working hours.

The workplace in the U.S. is changing rapidly, making it difficult to predict how important the use of email outside of traditional business hours will be in the future. The definition of "normal working hours" may become fuzzier as the prevalence of gig workers, remote workers and workers with flexible schedules increases.

Email clearly remains the major form of communication in today's

workplaces. The question of how email should be used most effectively to keep workers engaged and to help companies reach their objectives will most likely become more relevant going forward.

Survey Methods

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted March 9-29, 2017, with a random sample of 812 adults who are employed by an employer full or part time, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of workers, the margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting.

Each sample of national adults includes a minimum quota of 70% cellphone respondents and 30% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers are selected using random-digit-dial methods.

[View survey methodology, complete question responses and trends.](#)

Learn more about how the [Gallup Poll Social Series](#) works.