



Monitoring Employee Productivity in a Roaming Workplace

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You're not alone

There are many reasons why employees work from home. For some it's about removing distractions and finishing work. For others, productivity is thought to be higher overall. And for some, it's about maintaining a work-life balance.

Many companies today are allowing employees to work remotely. A full third of companies allow some employees to work from home, with up to 25% of Americans telecommuting at least once a week ¹. With technologies such as cloud-based applications, video conferencing, VoIP calling and others in play, remote employees are fully enabled to get their job done, no matter where they are.

Allowing employees to work remotely offers additional benefits such as improved employee satisfaction, reduced attrition, reduced unscheduled absences, and an expanded potential talent pool.

Even with those benefits, there are some challenges.

Often, employees who work from the office are blending home and work – they check personal email, use social media sites, make personal plans, pay bills online, etc. It should be expected that an employee working remotely is going to blend home and work even more frequently.

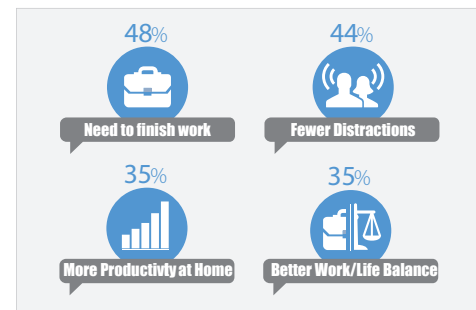
While some employees cite less work distractions when working remotely, there are obvious home distractions that are going to be more prevalent. And, in some cases, the distractions simply cannot be avoided, such as a sick child.

That being said, Yahoo! barring employees from telecommuting starting in early 2013 echoes the sentiment of some corporations. While there are various issues bosses state as the reason they don't like remote working, it boils down to one simple fact: they want to know their employees are working. In a traditional office environment, it's easy to walk by an employee's desk. It's obviously not as easy when someone is a thousand miles away.

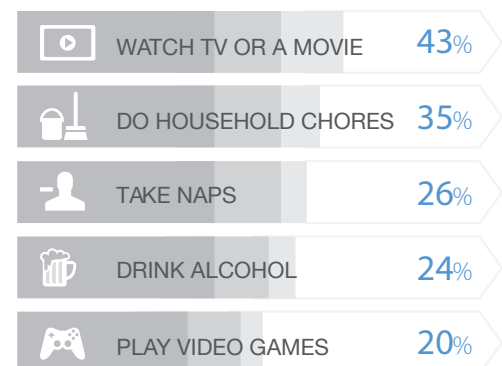
So, how do you know if your remote employees are productive?

¹ SHRM. Telecommuting Likely to Grow, Despite High-Profile Defections.
<http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/technology/articles/pages/telecommuting-likely-to-grow-bans.aspx#sthash.q1P8bQ6u.dpuf> 2013

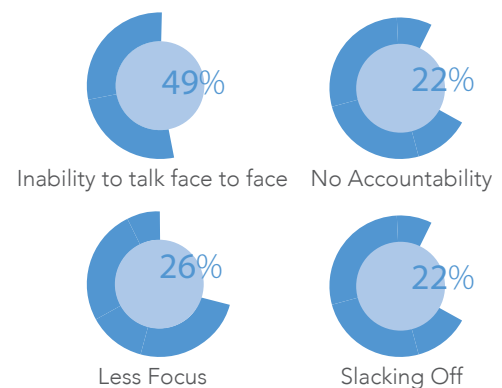
Why Employees Work Remotely



What Else Remote Employees Do While 'Working'



Why Bosses Don't Like Remote Working



The Challenge of Gauging Productivity

Companies with remote employees are generally concerned about productivity from two angles. Some companies wonder “Are they working at all?” while others are more concerned with “Are they working efficiently?”

Before eliminating their remote workforce, Yahoo! used Virtual Private Network (VPN) logs to “determine” remote employees weren’t getting the job done. Given that not every job function requires connectivity to a VPN, this obviously isn’t a perfect test for every company with remote employees. There are a number of different ways companies can measure the productivity of remote employees.

Measurable Results

Measuring productivity based on results requires quantifiable metrics, which can be challenging for businesses to define. In job functions like a call center representative, a simple metric of calls per hour can be used. However, when you have employees with varying responsibilities, creating metrics for each person will be required, with some degree of frequent revision.

Additionally, keep in mind that meeting a measurement doesn’t necessarily equate to productivity. If goals are set too low, an employee accomplishing the desired result may not be working at full capacity.

Connectivity to the Office

Just because an employee is connected to the office by a VPN doesn’t mean they’re working. And it also doesn’t necessarily mean they’re not.

For example, if a review of the VPN logs showed an employee was connected throughout the workday, but had minimal bandwidth usage, were they productive or not? It’s not that easy to tell. Some job functions might only require connection through a VPN to retrieve email, with most work locally performed on their laptop. Other jobs may require the heavy use of company resources through a VPN. Still others may retrieve email on their smartphone and not connect to a VPN at all.

Connectivity to the office as a productivity measurement only becomes viable if you create “connectivity personas”, defining the various roles within the organization and measure each to a relative benchmark. And, even then, connectivity doesn’t quantify productive from non-productive work; it only defines the frequency, duration and bandwidth use of the connection to the office.

Application-Specific Activity

Applications like Salesforce have their own built-in auditing of activity, giving management insight into whether or not work is being done. While this will provide a documented trail of activity, it’s important to note it is limited to the use of a single application. It would be quite a laborious task to correlate data from every application used to reconstruct an employee’s day.

How Long to Measure?

Consideration must be given to how long it will take to know if someone is productive or not. Measurable results make sense, but the more frequent the measurement, the more micromanaging is being done. This effectively constitutes paying two people, the employee and their boss, to ensure the employee is doing their job. However, measuring too infrequently means you may not be aware of problems that need to be resolved.

Regardless of which productivity concern fits your company you need answers in a matter of days, if not sooner. If someone is not doing his or her job, you want to take corrective action immediately. The same is true for someone doing their job incorrectly or inefficiently.

No matter the method, you need a way to gauge productivity within a reasonable timeframe using intelligence that allows you to identify trends and take action.

What Comparisons Should Be Made

An employee can't be measured on a single activity or action. They need to be measured on the entirety of their work. Depending on the job function, an employee's day is made up of a mixture of corporate, local and internet-based applications, internet-based data and resources, email, chat, and even social media. You need to be watching each activity individually, as well as their summation, to determine an employee's productivity.

Additionally, measuring one employee against a peer group provides perspective as to whether they are spending too little, just enough or too much time performing an activity. Viewing the productivity of a group allows you to identify the best practices of your top producers, creating a benchmark of efficiency standards.

Lastly, measurement should be done using a proactive methodology where standards are defined, notifications are sent when employees fall outside those standards, and a proper review of activity can be done quickly and efficiently.

Measuring Productivity with User Activity Monitoring

Veriato 360 is a user activity monitoring (UAM) solution used by tens of thousands of businesses to measure employee productivity with incredible levels of detail. The software provides productivity metrics and the specific activity behind those metrics. This empowers businesses with the intelligence and context necessary to identify employee productivity issues and address them rapidly.

How It Works

Running on the employee's Windows or Mac computer, Veriato 360 has the ability to record every logon/logoff, keystroke, application, email, chat, web page, print job, and more. It then provides the ability to review recorded actions with Screen Playback as if you were sitting at the employee's computer. Being able to run silently, companies can see the natural behavior of employees, allowing for accurate productivity metrics.

Veriato 360 aggregates the collected employee activity data and provides several ways to review the information. Activity can be reviewed by drilling down to granular detail based on a specific user or activity type, or through a keyword search. However, the most effective way Veriato 360 presents the data is within a dashboard, making it a fast and easy task to see exactly what your remote employees are doing.

Figure 1 shows an example of how the aggregated activity data appears within a Veriato 360 dashboard. The dashboards are customizable, providing a birds-eye view of your most important aspects of productivity.

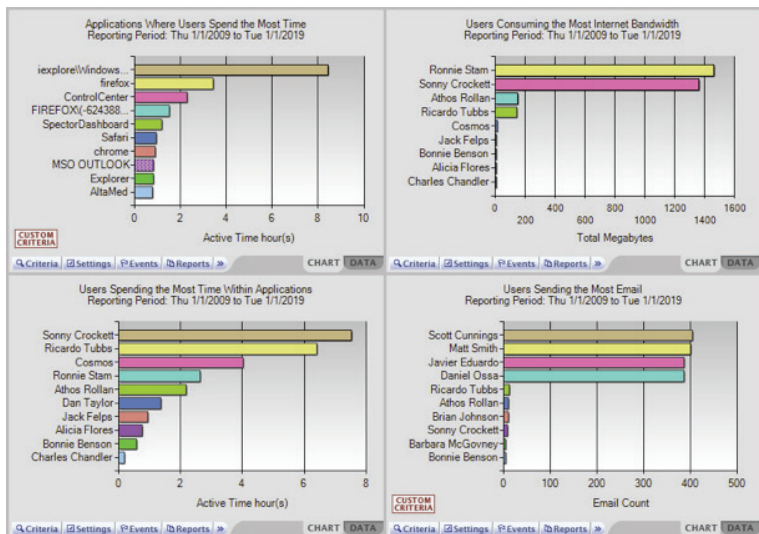


Figure 1: Take a birds-eye look at employee activity with the Veriato 360 dashboard

Each dashboard can be used to drill down into specific activities which, in turn, can be used to view the corresponding screen captures to replay the employees actions, as shown in Figure 2.

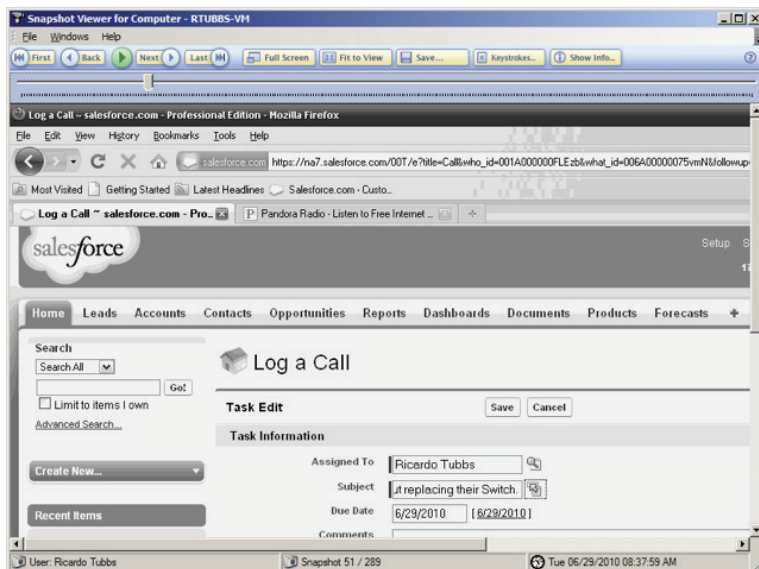


Figure 2: Replaying Employee Activity with Veriato 360

Another valuable feature of Veriato 360 is its ability to alert management when specific keywords or actions occur within an employee's activities. This enables you to identify a potential problem employee, highlighting productivity issues as they surface. Veriato 360 can play back the employee's computer activity surrounding the actions raising the alert, offering context to the offending actions.

Additionally, Veriato 360 has both turnkey and custom reporting on any activity collected. Coupled with powerful screen snapshots, Veriato 360 provides many options for measuring employee productivity.

Measuring Application Use

Veriato 360 records application use as a key part of your productivity measurement arsenal. As shown in Figure 3, for every application utilized by an employee, Veriato 360 tracks three usage metrics:

- **Total Time:** This is amount of time an application was open.
- **Focus Time:** This is the amount of time the application was in the foreground, in front of every other application.
- **Active Time:** This is the amount of time the user interacted with an application via keyboard and mouse.

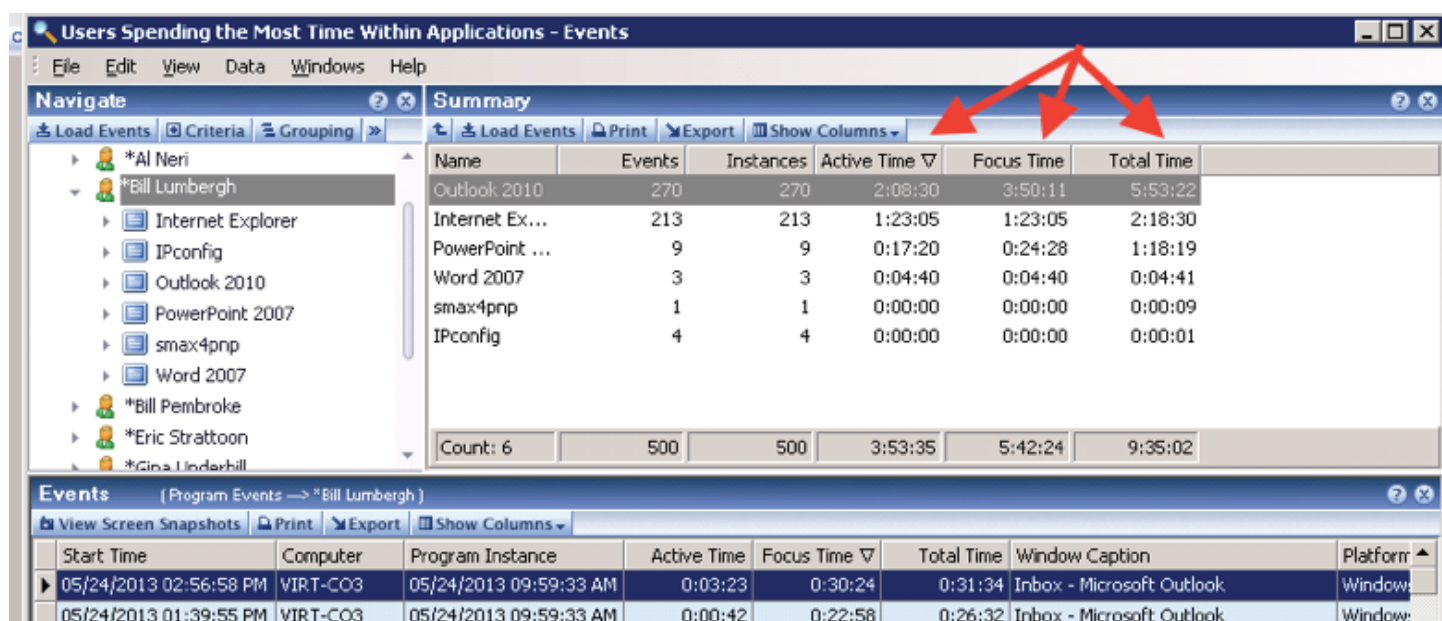


Figure 3

Why do you need three measurements? Context. Exploding out the various reports making up Figure 3, we will explore each of the three measurements.

In Figure 3A Walter Sobchak has the most time in a given application, with a total time over 26 hours in Outlook alone. However, is he actually working?

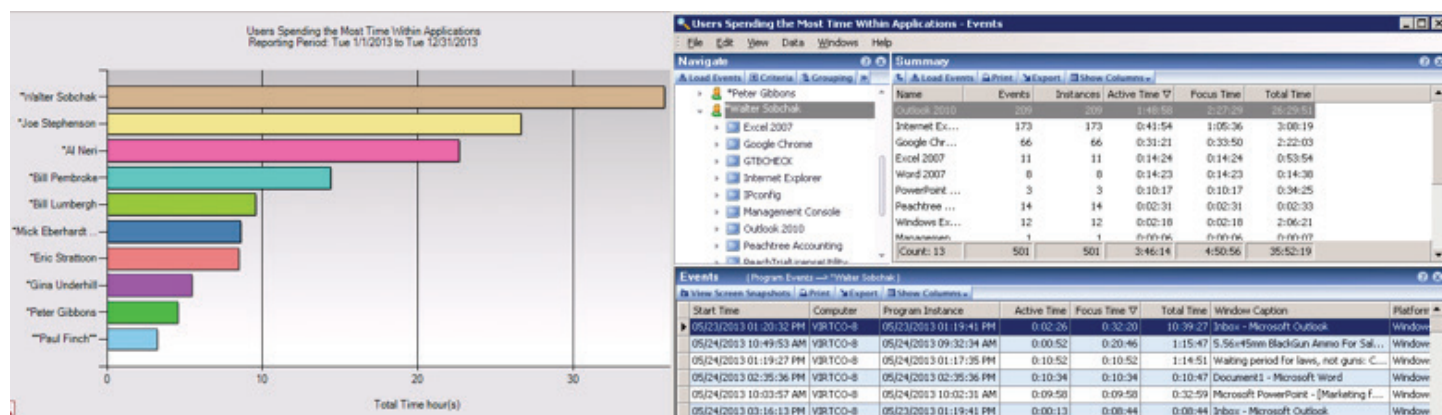


Figure 3A

In figure 3B, we can drill down to the Event detail, and look at the Summary pane to find Walter's Focus and Active Time (less than 3 hours and less than 2 hours respectively). It's clear he's not spending 26 hours working in this application.

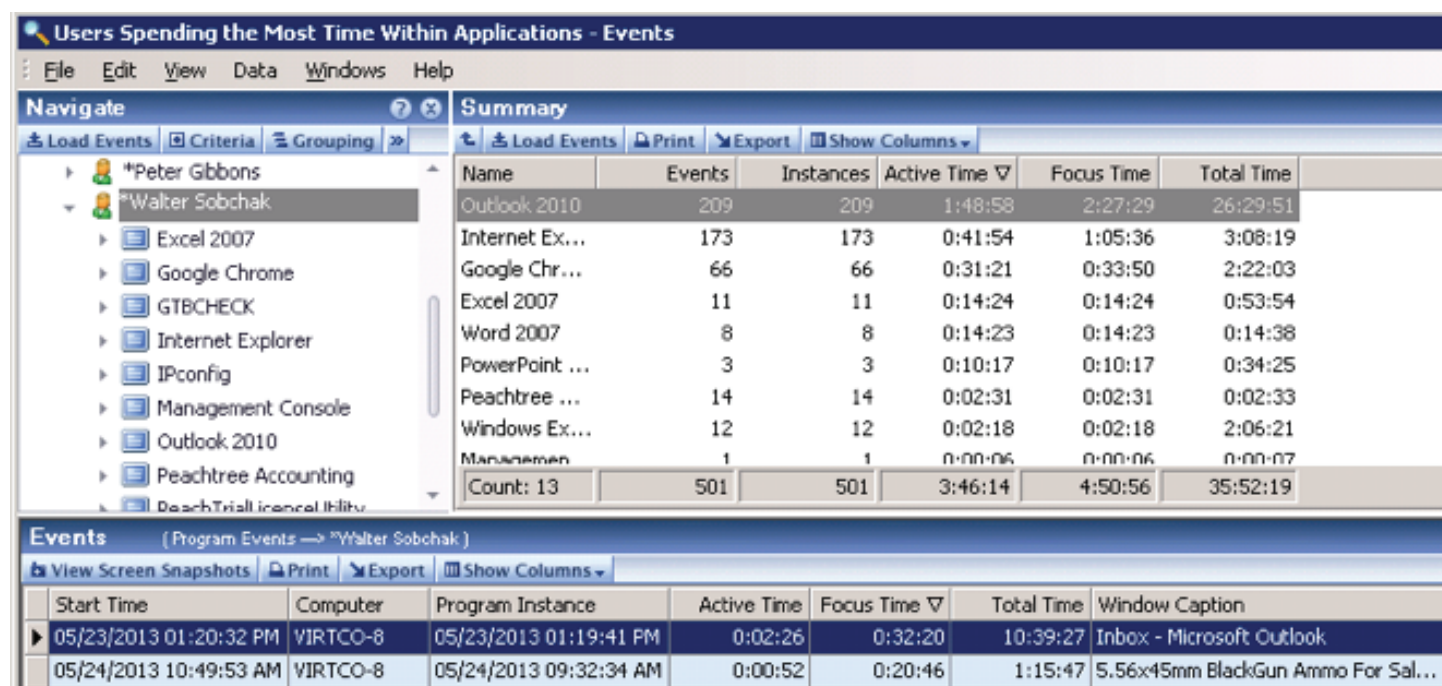


Figure 3B

Another aspect of context is the ability to compare one employee to another. Notice how in Figure 3C you are able to see employee activity in aggregate. This is an important feature within Veriato 360. You will see that Bill and Walter are spending the most Active Time in applications when compared to their peers. You can then determine if Bill and Walter are setting the baseline for productivity, or if they are using corporate resources inappropriately. It is this context that empowers business with true intelligence about their employee's actions.

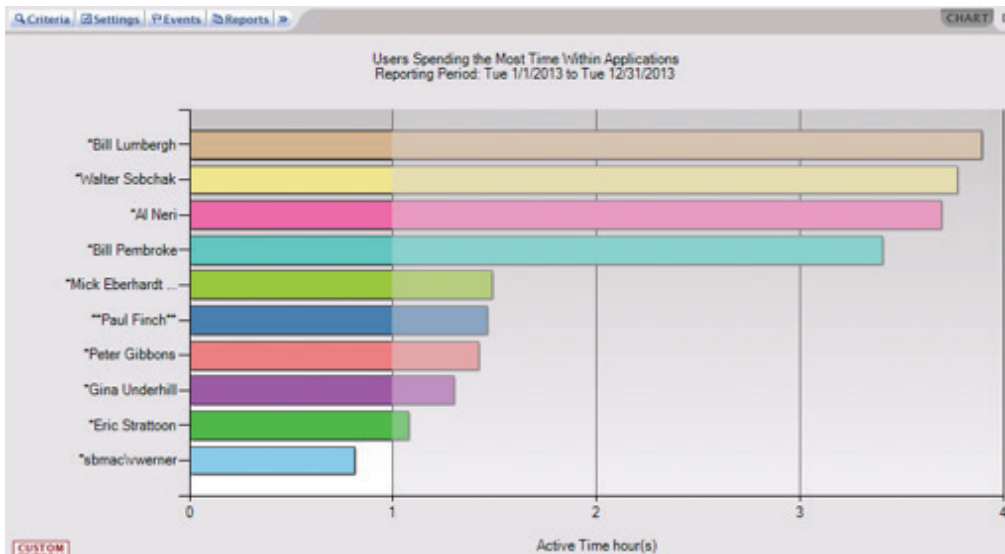


Figure 3C

Measuring Productivity with User Activity Monitoring

Email, chat and internet usage by a remote employee can be either an indicator of a solid day's work or a complete lack of productivity. That's why Veriato 360 provides the ability to not only review the data, as shown in Figure 4, but the powerful drill-down capability to review the specific events making up that activity.

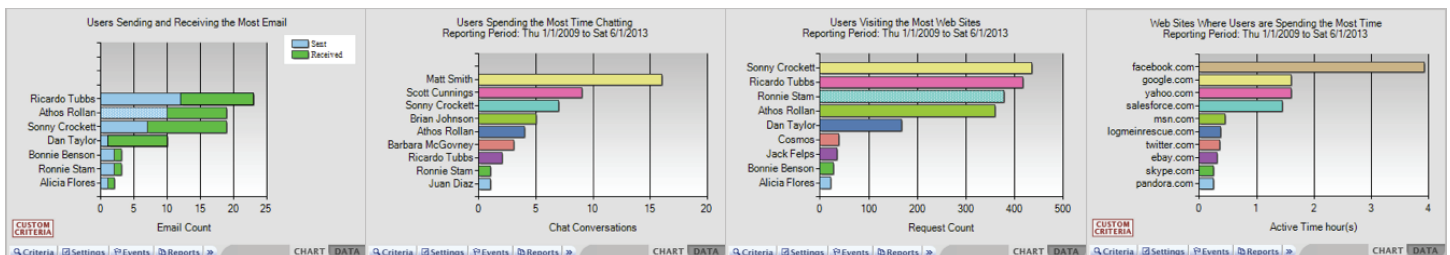


Figure 4: Reviewing Remote Employee Email, Chat and Internet activity

Keep in mind you could review the Total, Focus and Active Time values to provide even more context around email, chat and internet usage.

Who Reviews the Data

Most companies utilizing user activity monitoring to measure employee productivity choose to compartmentalize the ability to review the data. That is, individual managers are able to see the activity of their own department, but not others. However, Veriato 360 is flexible enough to customize which managers can review some, all, or no employee activity. Veriato 360 makes this an easy task allowing you to not only specify which users can be reviewed, but also which activities can be reviewed.

The ROI of Employee Productivity

The easiest way to calculate an Employee Productivity ROI with Veriato 360 is to take the simple case of productivity loss due to employees wasting time on the internet. While this isn't the only way lack of productivity can cost companies money, it is a tangible way to measure at least part of the ROI of a Veriato 360 purchase.

Salary.com's annual "Wasted Time at Work" survey showed that in 2014, 31% of employees wasted 30 minutes per day, and another 31% waste roughly 1 hour per day². The average time wasted per employee is almost 69 minutes per day, and 4% of people surveyed waste a shocking half of the average workday.

The ROI chart shown in Figure 5 demonstrates how quickly a 100-employee company can have a positive return on investment in Veriato 360.

Organization Profile

Employee Data	
Number of Employees	100 Employees
Average Hourly Employee Cost *	30 Per Hour
Productivity Metrics	
Minutes per day each employee spends on personal sites	15 Minutes **
% of personal time reduced by having activity information	30 %
* Per 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics - http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/bsce.pdf	
** Salary.com 2014 survey states avg minutes wasted per employee per day is 69	

Productivity Savings	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Productivity loss Without v.Insight	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$195,000
Remaining productivity loss after v.Insight	\$136,500	\$136,500	\$136,500
Savings by Implementing v.Insight	\$58,500	\$58,500	\$58,500

v.Insight Investment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
v.Insight Purchase/Renewal for 100 licenses	\$9,000	\$3,600	\$3,600
Total v.Insight Investment	\$9,000	\$3,600	\$3,600

Three Year ROI

Three Year Net Savings	\$159,300
Three Year Total Costs	\$16,200
Payback Period (in months)	3.7
ROI	983.3%

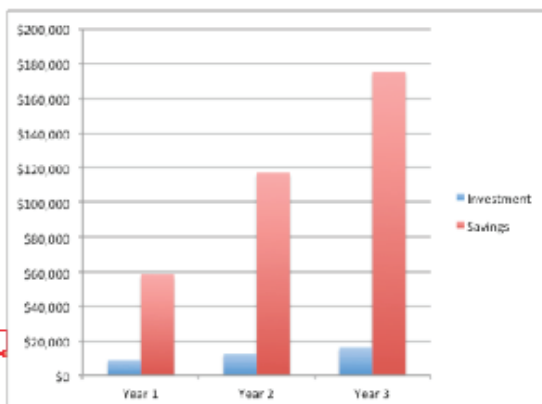


Figure 5: Calculating a 3-year ROI of Employee Productivity

Rather than the average 69 minutes of wasted time per employee daily, we will use more conservative numbers of only 15 minutes of wasted time per employee. By eliminating just 5 minutes of that wasted time per employee per day, the payback period is less than four months. Clearly, a nominal investment in an effective employee monitoring program centered around Veriato 360 provides tremendous value and benefit in a short time horizon.

² <http://www.salary.com/2014-wasting-time-at-work/slide/2/>

Conclusion

Remote employees have more opportunity for distraction, lack of training, and inability to be refocused on task than their in-office counterparts. Therefore, companies need to get serious about ways to gain visibility into the activities of their remote employees to gauge productivity. With unparalleled visibility into what remote employees do daily, Veriato 360 provides the information and intelligence needed to take action against inappropriate behavior in an appropriate timeframe.

Veriato 360 Resources

[Free Trial](#)

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