



The Covid diaries: Day 47 - Should You Be Reading This Blog?

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A daily fly-on-the-wall blog about running a legal business during the Covid-19 crisis.

By Dónall Breen - 22 May

Does reading this article count as work?

Are you actually finished for the weekend or is our hard-hitting blogging getting in the way of that one last task?

More importantly, if someone took a screen shot of your computer right now, capturing all the tabs you have open, and sent it to your manager - would you be worried?

Well, for many employees, that's what happens every few minutes.

This morning Darren sent me an article about productivity monitoring software that periodically captures screenshots and keystrokes. In a thinly veiled attack on my utilisation, the article made me realise that if this was implemented I wouldn't be the first or last white collar worker to start having their screen time recorded. Monitoring software is on the rise, and with so many people working from home companies are looking to digitise the key managerial task of peering over your shoulder now and again.

In truth, as someone who manages to carve out 30 minutes a day to work on their irrelevant soapbox blog I know all about procrastination and distraction. I can understand the lure of managers to this software, being able to keep an eye on employees who are known to read one too many Daily Mail articles once they hit the 3pm slump.

But I add this health warning - thread carefully. It is a Friday, and frankly I am already aggressively winding down for the weekend, so I won't go into the law. But tracking employees, even when using company equipment, is far from straight forward. GDPR, your local data protection laws, discrimination and harassment laws and a slew of other legal minefields mean that a disgruntled employee has a potential bag of ammunition to fire at you if you misstep.

It doesn't mean you can't use this software, many employers in the UK already do, but you should be careful.

So with that in mind, get back to work!

Unless you are reading this outside of working hours, in which case, thanks for reading.

Have a good weekend everyone, from all us here at GQ|Littler. Don't forget that we have yet another long weekend here in the UK this weekend - so back on Tuesday.

This blog was based off an excellent article from Australia's ABC, see [here](#) if you want to read more.

If you would like to read our **Covid diaries starting from day 1** please click [here](#).