New trends

1. A virtual company

• As we are going to listen to a radio programme about telecommuting, I guess the woman is working from home.

• She has a lot of technological devices: a computer with a big screen, a keyboard...

• What’s striking is that she is dressed as if she was at work, I mean, in an office. What I mean is that I imagine telecommuters wearing very casual clothes.

• That’s true but if she has a videoconference with her boss she has to be properly dressed just the same.

• Well, I don’t really know what “virtual company” refers to, but I guess it’s because this company is using information communication to work.

• When something is virtual, it has no real existence, so I don’t fully understand what a virtual company really is. Only existing through the internet? selling people goods through the internet?

• More and more people telecommute, about 17 million, I think. It’s not unusual to work from home → it’s getting more mainstream.

• Some companies allow their employees to telecommute, but I don’t know how many and I’m not quite sure if they always work from home or if they have to go to the office some days.

• Laura Schoppe is the manager of Fuentek, she has created this company. All the employees in this company/firm work from home.

• Laura has got an “office” above her garage. I think she lives in North Carolina and she has got dogs.

Fuentek

• founded in 2001 by Laura Schoppe with two other people

• a multi-million dollar company, helps clients sell communication technology

• in 2010: employs 40 people – different kinds of jobs, such as technical writers, engineers...
• All the employees have to/are required to do their jobs from home/telecommute because there is no office building - that’s why Laura Schoope says it’s a virtual company

**Advantages of telecommuting**

• employees work better: they are more productive and more loyal

• they can organize their schedules as they want

• telecommuting makes it possible for / enables employees to have more time for their personal and family life = it enables them to balance their professional and personal life

• it’s good for the employers too: they don’t have to buy an office building, to pay for electricity and heating, so running the company is cheaper

• the service for the clients is as good as in a more traditional firm

**Telecommuting trends**

• rare to have a firm like Fuentek where everyone works from home / without any office building

• more and more popular for employers:
  - large and small companies let some of their workers telecommute
  - in 2008: 1/3 of companies allow employees to telework

• I’m quite surprised there can be some officeless companies.

• I don’t think obliging people to work from home is a good thing.

• I agree with you, I think they should be able to choose.

• It would be interesting to have an employee’s point of view.

• I’d like to know if telecommuting is as popular in France as in the United States.
2. Telecommute Nation

The photo dates back to December 2010 and shows president Obama signing an Act or a law about telecommuting. With this law it will be easier for federal employees (= people who work for federal agencies = government managed offices) to do their jobs from home. In fact the government want to develop telecommuting / they want as many people as possible to telework.

• We can read that a lot of people – 34 million – work from home, not all the time/not full time, but at least some days/part time. What is striking is that a lot more people have the possibility to do so but don’t and we don’t know if they will in the future.

• It seems that all the employees are not really willing to work from home / are reluctant to telework even if they are allowed to do so.

• The government had to promote telecommuting. Maybe they asked people to telecommute.

Informations concernant l’auteur

• journalist – works for The Atlantic (l. 8-9)

• works in Washington D.C.

• could telecommute but prefers sitting at his desk

• prefers walking half an hour to and from work even when it’s very hot, than working from home

• has no better equipment at home than at his office (no better internet – only needs a laptop)

• asks why people who can telecommute don’t

Statistics

• in 2011: one in twenty employed Americans works consistently from home

• 2008: it was predicted that, in 2012, 75% of the workforce would be mobile

2009: it was predicted that before 2020, there would be four times more telecommuters

• half of the jobs available can be done from home, especially jobs involving information technology
The journalist wants to point out that a lot of people could do their jobs from home but don’t.

A lot of predictions were made about the growth of telecommuting and demographers thought the number of telecommuters would increase tremendously but the reality is a bit different.

The journalist shows that people who are given the opportunity to telecommute don’t, like him. He wants to know/to explain why.

What is striking is that telecommuting has tremendously/dramatically increased between 2000 and 2008: from about 16 million telecommuters, it surged to 34 million. Then it dropped by about 8 million.

It’s worth mentioning that the Telework Enhancement Act seems to have had an impact / to have triggered an upward trend.

It would be interesting to know why all the people who can telework don’t: maybe they want to meet their co-workers, or it may be difficult for them to have a flat or a house big enough to set an office, or it may be an obstacle/a hindrance to career advancement...

The employers may be reluctant to let them work remotely: they may fear they might be less productive.

Recap

Teleworking is becoming more and more mainstream in the US, especially for jobs/positions in information technology.

Some large and small companies, as well as the federal government, give their employees the opportunity to work from home/remotely at least part time.

Even if Information Technology has made it possible for a large number of people to telecommute, telecommuting is not developing as fast as it could: it had to be encouraged/enhanced by a law.

Some people – employers and employees – seem to be reluctant to telework.
### Training Task 1: Reading the news

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<td>UK</td>
<td>• UK govt: want people to work from home (Olympic Games)</td>
<td>• Why people should work from home (Olympic Games: traffic congestion, lots of visitors, security measures, not easy to go to work, delays...)</td>
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<td>• Telecommuting not very popular</td>
<td>• Possible reasons: for employers/employees</td>
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<td>India</td>
<td>• IT employers not very keen on telecommuting</td>
<td>• Description of employers’ past attitudes and motivations:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• A change: more and more let employees telecommute</td>
<td>- fear employees might not meet deadlines/work less</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- not easy to equip all employees with laptops</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• why things are changing – examples of success:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- studies showing better productivity</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- no need to have large offices</td>
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<td>- no transportation delays</td>
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<td>- better broadband connections</td>
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<td>- employees’ demands</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>Increasing number of telecommuters in large companies ≠ small companies</td>
<td>• Reasons why the trend is different in large and small companies:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- difficult for large companies to accommodate all their employees</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- employees in large companies may travel further to get to work</td>
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<td>Etc.</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>Dramatic increase, then slow down</td>
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<td>Had to be promoted</td>
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