

Chapter 8

The Blending of Work, Play & Learning Online: The Pajama Effect

ABSTRACT

Increased connectivity through digitally mediated communications has brought about a radical change in the way people interact and communicate, thus blurring the lines between different facets of life. The pajama effect helps to explain how individuals in an increasingly connected society are able to blend online work, play and learning while remaining productive. Shifts in pedagogy include constructivism and connectivism as the preferred theories for developing m-Learning applications and platforms. Faster and smarter technologies will enable virtual teams, learners, and educators to better collaborate and remain connected.

OBJECTIVES

- Propose a new term called “the pajama effect” for the purpose of better understanding the phenomenon of how members of a fast-paced, digitally connected society are able to blend the different facets of their lives and still get things done.
- Define the pajama effect.

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- Identify and discuss current trends in telecommuting and mobile learning.
- Identify and discuss how technology tools aide in the blending of work, play, and learning, thus changing the way people communicate and collaborate.
- Explore constructivism as pedagogy for work, play, and learning online.
- Identify and discuss the future of work, play, and learning, as technology continues to evolve and impact our lives.

INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements shape and re-shape the way people communicate for work, leisure or learning and how they go about their day-to-day activities. Many praise technology for its ability to make things easier, but the other side of technology is that as it brings us closer together, it may also take away our ability to disconnect from our networks and relax. Increased demands on our time have forced us to blend our activities in order to get things done.

In this chapter the blending of work, play and learning are explored through the lens of the pajama effect. The term “pajama effect” is proposed by the authors of this chapter as a means of understanding the blending phenomenon. For the purpose of this discussion, the pajama effect will be defined as:

The pajama effect is the ability of those connected via digitally mediated communications, such as telecommuters and online learners, to blend their private and public lives while remaining highly productive as they work, play and learn online, hence thriving in a flexible environment that is physically detached and where distractions and interruptions abound. Such individuals may work in a more relaxed environment yet they are vulnerable to isolation and other challenges that emerge from being detached from the physical work, play, or learning space.

Despite the challenges of remaining connected and increased demands by employers and educational institutions, users crave increased mobility, higher network speeds and more flexibility. Companies around the globe continue to opt for telecommuting as a means to save, but also to increase productivity. The increase in telecommuting translates into more virtual teaming and extensive requirements for collaborating and communicating using technology.

Education continues to be affected by technological advancements as well. Whether for professional development, specialized training, K-12 online learning or higher education, the blending of learning and playing is more evident with technology. The same is for work, with more professions than ever before relying on virtual reality games for training purposes. Mobile learning technologies will

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