



The Future of Work

PART 1 of 2

Four Emerging Trends
Shaping How We Work

June 2020





The Way We Work is Shifting with Unprecedented Speed

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way business gets done.

Offices closed worldwide, shifting entirely to remote work. Productivity and processes anywhere, anytime became the new normal. Increased adoption of document management, collaboration, and web conferencing tools are facilitating this urgent digitization and empowering knowledge workers.

This report outlines four major trends we observed as a result of this global shift.

Before COVID-19 There Was Paper—and Lots of It

Physical paper is moved by physical processes. Even if parts of those workflows are digital, paper-based processes are slower, more costly, have inherent security liabilities, and often require people to work in the same location.

As noted in the [Nitro 2020 Productivity Report](#) released in Q4 2019, paper-based workflows were part of daily office life for most survey respondents. The same behavior continued through into early 2020 before COVID-19.



Pre-COVID-19 Study on Workplace Productivity
% Of Those Surveyed



Four New Digitization Trends in the Wake of COVID-19

The global pandemic initiated a rapid and immediate shift to remote work and required companies to harness the potential of digital workflow and collaboration solutions in order to continue operating.

The switch to digital workflows has been swift and, for companies finding ways to navigate these changes, it is this way of working which is creating new possibilities.

Using **Nitro Analytics**, the analytics platform that helps our customers manage their digital transformation journey, we identified **four global trends taking shape in this new era of digital document workflows**. Examining and understanding each of these can help understand the path forward.



Insights from
Nitro Analytics

TREND 1

Printing has declined massively and rapidly

TREND 2

Migration to digital workflows has been expedited

TREND 3

Electronic signing has accelerated

TREND 4

Work has spread outside of normal business hours



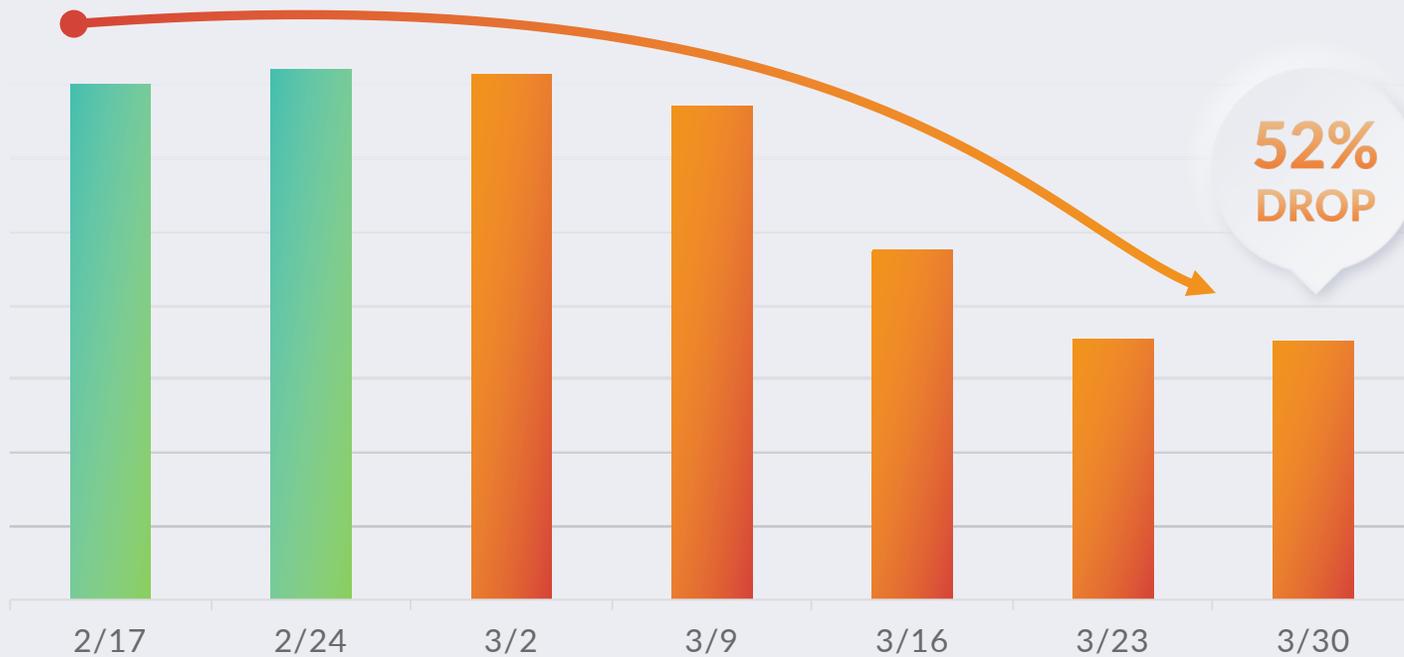
Data from Nitro Analytics
From 2/17/20 to 3/30/20

This report looks at the aggregated data from February through March 2020 collected by Nitro Analytics. Using that robust data set, we've examined the impact of the global pandemic on productivity across industries..



TREND 1

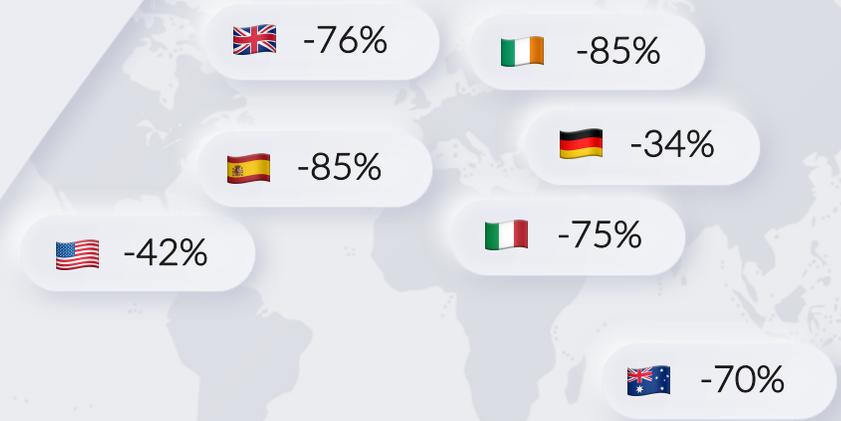
A Massive Drop in Printing to Paper



Since employees started working from home without access to office printers, we have seen a 52% decline in global printing. Such a startling plunge shows how prevalent this wasteful (and largely unnecessary) printing habit had been.

By Country

The drop in printing has been most pronounced in much of Europe, where countries were able to apply policy shifts to their entire population.



TREND 2

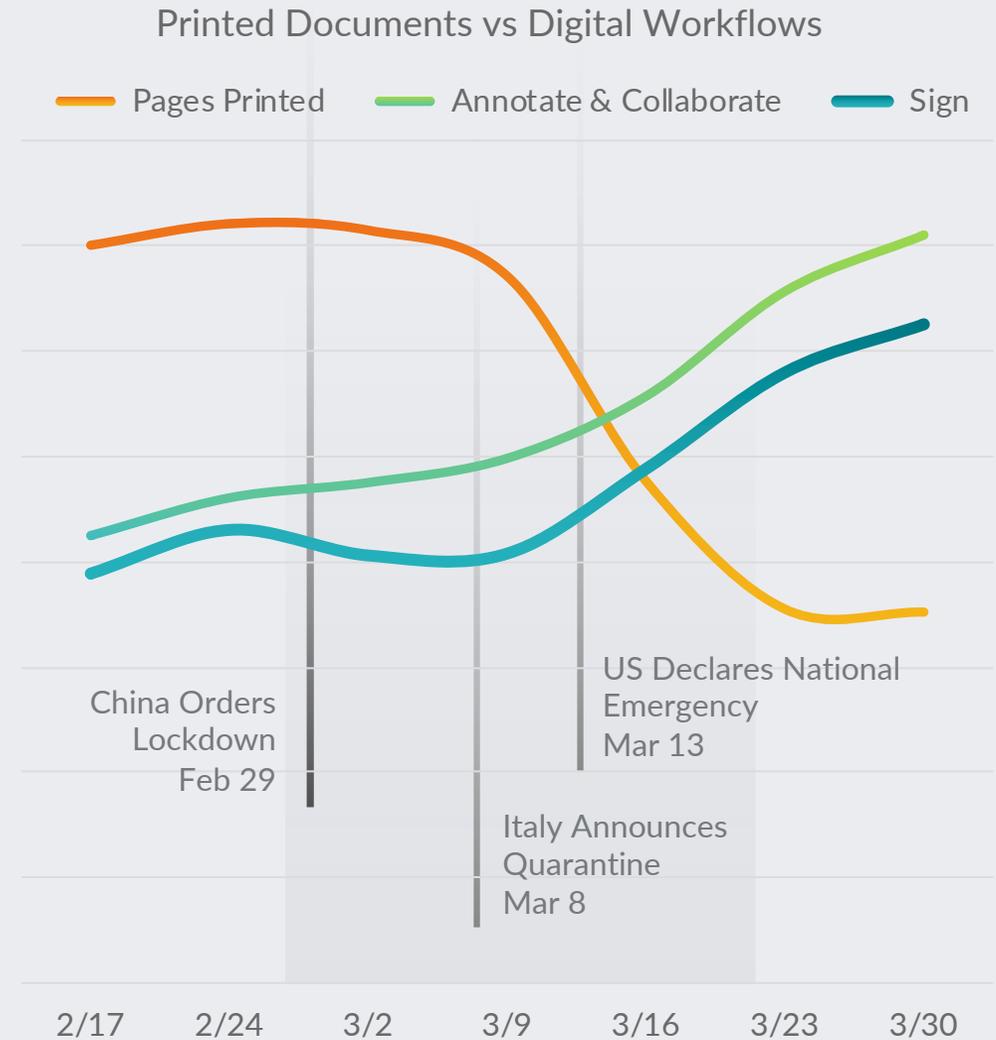
An Urgent Migration from Paper to Digital Workflows

Replacing Paper-Based Workflows

Remote productivity was challenging for knowledge workers who relied upon office printers and scanners. It also became impossible do common tasks such as redline a document and walk it over to a colleague for input.

With global work-from-home orders in place, it quickly became digitized document workflows or no workflows.

As countries activated national responses to COVID-19, there was a rapid reduction in printing and an immediate surge in digitization. Such a dramatic surge wouldn't have otherwise occurred in such an abbreviated timeframe.



TREND 2

An Urgent Migration from Paper to Digital Workflows

Digital Document Tools Take Off

A breakdown of the workflows from the same period illustrates remarkable digital workflow spikes, revealing just how much knowledge workers were rapidly replacing their paper-based processes. All forms of digital workflows saw significant adoption and volume increases.

 **67%** increase
Digital Annotation
& Collaboration

 **108%** increase
Electronic Signature
Requests

 **92%** increase
Digital Form Filling

 **61%** increase
Digital Signing



Data from Nitro Analytics
From 2/17/20 to 3/30/20



TREND 2

An Urgent Migration from Paper to Digital Workflows

A Shift Seen Across Nearly Every Industry

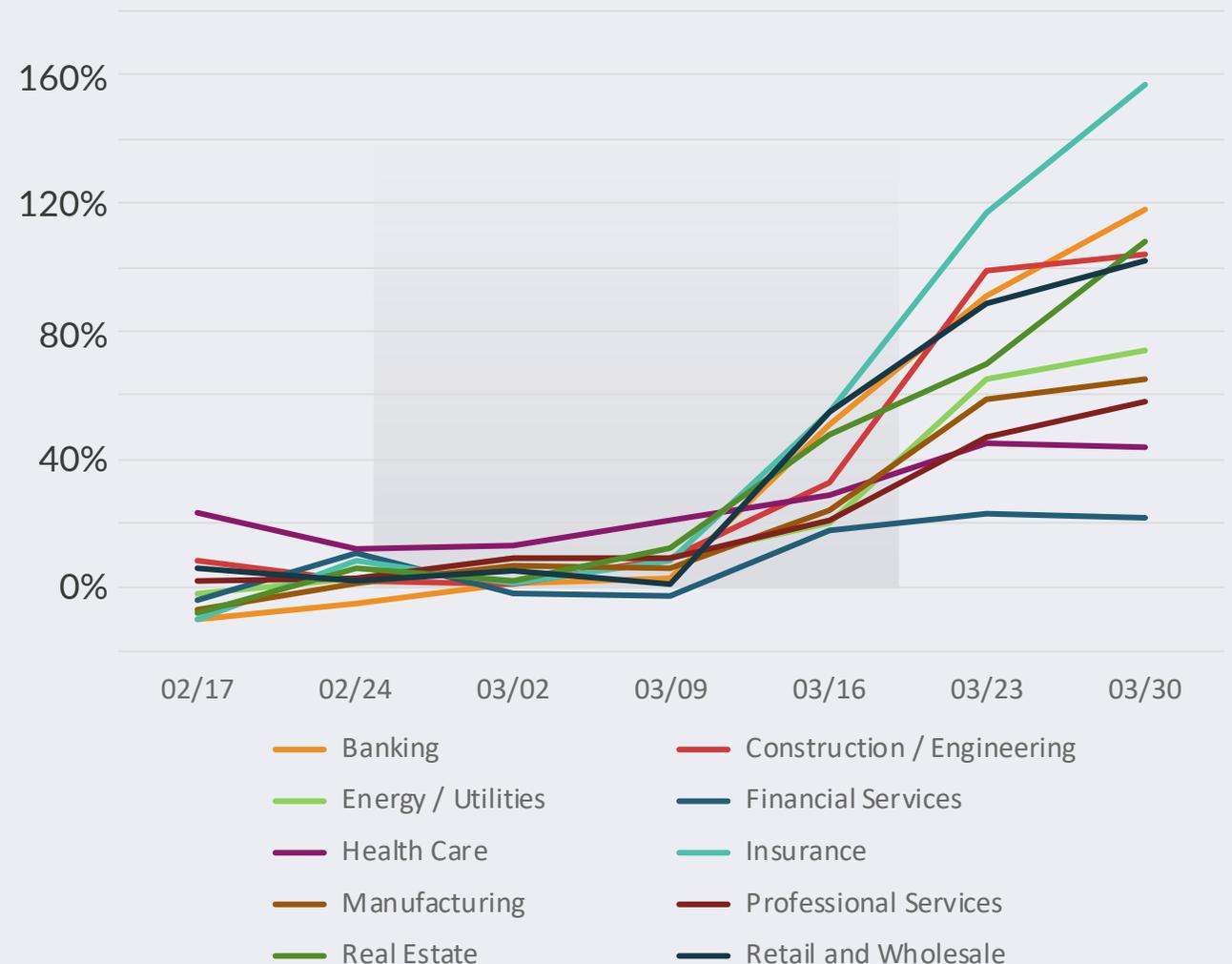
Adoption of digital workflows occurred in nearly every key industry. Those industries that typically involve a high volume of printed documents and paper-based workflows—like Insurance, Banking, Construction, and Real Estate—logged the highest usage of many digital workflows.

"With many of our staff not having printers at home, we've seen a marked shift in terms of their increased use of digital tools—and electronic signatures in particular—in order to help maintain business continuity and optimize efficiencies in this new way of working."

Gerard Ding

Head of Information Technology ANZ, JLL

Applying eSignature to PDF (QuickSign): Growth Across Industries



Data from Nitro Analytics
From 2/17/20 to 3/30/20



TREND 3

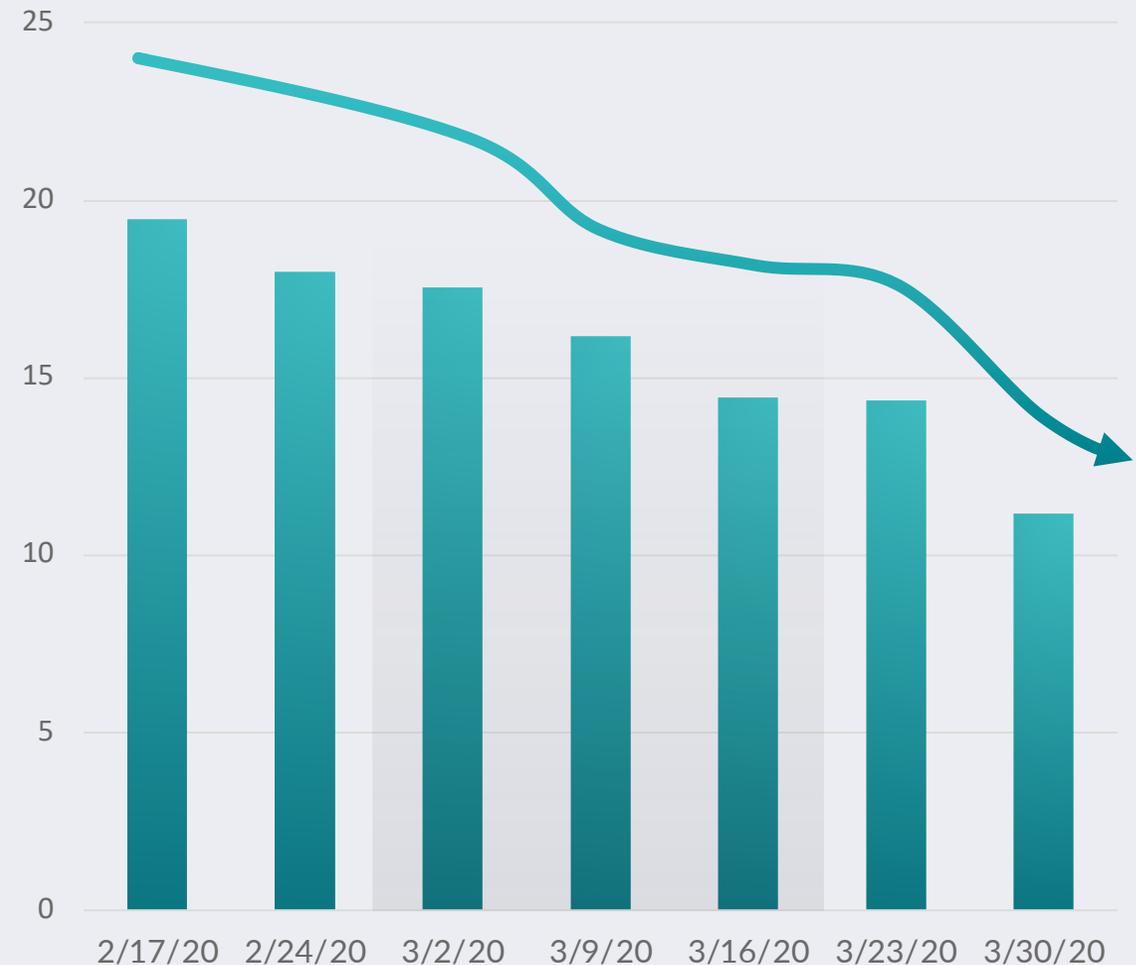
Documents are Being Signed Faster

A slowdown in document signing might have been anticipated in this uncertain environment, but electronic signatures were being returned 43% more quickly across all document types (contracts, invoices, SOWs, etc.). This reflects an average 14-hour turnaround.

43% Faster
Signature Return

The change is a presumed result of recipients having computers and/or smartphones nearby while working at home, along with some new to eSigning tools.

Average Signature Request Turnaround Time
(in hours)

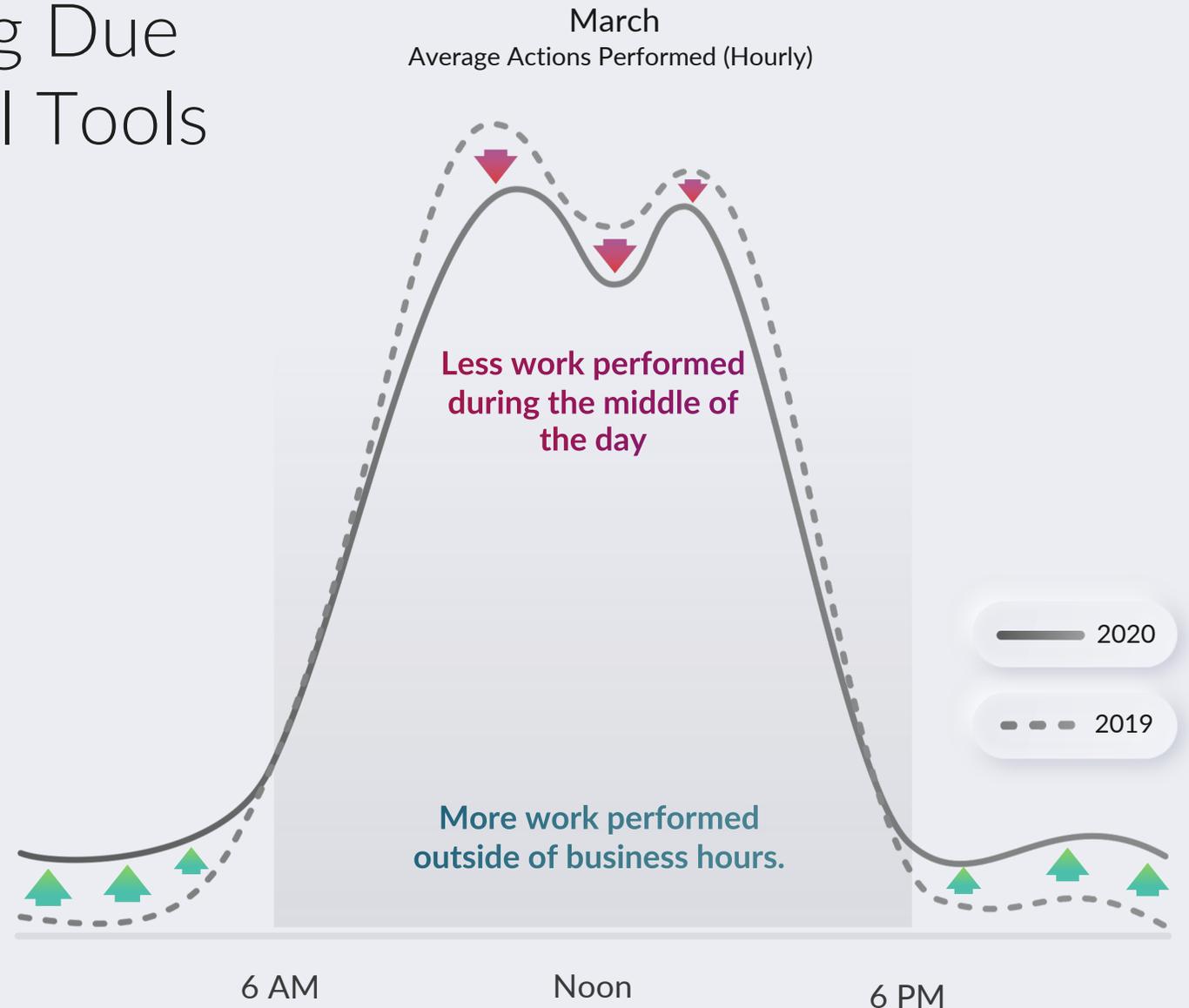


TREND 4

The Workday is Expanding Due to Always Available Digital Tools

Work-at-home orders eliminated commute time, but atypical domestic challenges (childcare, distance learning for school-age children, new household chores) have also impacted the traditional workday.

Examining year-over-year data, in 2019, about 10% of work took place outside the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. Now nearly 20% of work is occurring outside of those hours. While the total amount of work accomplished remains steady, working hours are more evenly distributed across a broader part of the day.



A Temporary Blip or Seismic Transformation?

The workplace as we knew it won't be returning. There will be new constraints, reconfiguring of spaces, and other considerations, all with cost implications.

Knowledge workers have adjusted to working from home, while paper-based processes are now relics of a recent past. What are the expectations moving forward? Productivity metrics, work-life balance, and the work week itself will have to be revisited.

Coming Soon: The Future of Work, Part 2

We'll continue gathering data from Nitro Analytics, monitoring trends, and surveying knowledge workers globally to discover how remote work has impacted productivity—positively, negatively, or not at all. In addition, we'll examine any signs of this behavior being temporary or part of a “new normal”.



Insights from
Nitro Analytics



197
Countries



38 Million
Daily Events



22+
Industries

Data privacy and information security is paramount at Nitro, and any personal or identifying information is removed prior to any data being used to generate reports like this one.





Nitro is a global document productivity software company driving digital transformation in organizations around the world across multiple industries.

Nitro has over **2 million licenses** sold, and over **11,000 Business customers** in **144 countries** around the world, including over 65% of the 2019 Fortune 500, and two of the 2019 Fortune 10.

Our core solution, the Nitro Productivity Suite, provides integrated PDF productivity, eSignature and business intelligence (BI) tools to customers through a horizontal, SaaS and desktop-based software suite. Now available standalone, Nitro Sign is the electronic signature solution that allows individuals and teams to get documents signed smarter, faster, and more securely.



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