

The Zoom logo is centered at the top of the page. It consists of the word "zoom" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font. The background features a network diagram with blue lines connecting various circular nodes. Each node contains an illustration of people working or communicating. In the top-left node, a person is on a video call. In the top-right node, a group of four people are in a meeting. In the middle-left node, a woman is presenting to a group of five people. In the middle-right node, two people are in a meeting. In the bottom-left node, a person is on a video call. In the bottom-right node, a person is on a video call. The overall theme is digital connectivity and remote work.

zoom

How Australians are Connecting

Connectivity Report 2020

Foreword

This year has redefined what disruption means. People have had to separate from their colleagues – and often their families – and physical workplaces have been transformed to ensure people maintain social distancing. These transformations required a greater leveraging of technology than we've ever had before, giving us a glimpse of the future of work and accelerating our progress toward it. At the heart of this movement into the future are changes in how we connect with each other.

There's never been a better time for businesses to find out how connected their employees are. Has the pandemic made us feel less connected or has technology made us feel closer? This impacts business but is also a deeply human question. It encompasses the relationships colleagues have with each other as well as their attachment to their companies.



Zoom conducted a unique research project in Australia designed to find out:

- The benefits of connectivity in the workplace
- The risks of not feeling connected
- What drives connectivity
- The role of technology
- How technology use has changed since the pandemic
- Differences among key segments of the workforce (remote workers, senior vs. junior, and so on)

Surveying more than 1,000 Australian workers, we created an index that quantifies connections at work. The methodology is repeatable so the index won't just be useful for this year – it will help us track how connectivity changes over time. With 2020 as a baseline, it is almost guaranteed to shift significantly.

The fact that just over half (55%) of respondents say their organisations are properly set up for communication in the post-COVID world proves the timeliness of this report.

The findings of this report suggest that there is no going back to the way things used to be. We can't view the past with rose-tinted glasses, and we must push forward. The forces driving greater connectivity have to be addressed by leaders of all organisations if they want to be ready for the future.

We hope you find the report illuminating, and thanks for reading.



Michael Chetner

Head of Australia and Asia Pacific
at Zoom Video Communications

Defining and measuring connectivity

When it comes to work and workplaces, what is a connection and what does it mean to feel connected? Renowned professor and lecturer Brené Brown perhaps said it best: “Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard and valued.”

If we want to measure connectivity, Brown’s definition seems like the right place to start. By examining academic and government papers, we arrived at four pillars of connectivity that capture this sentiment:

Efficiency

How quickly and how well work gets done. **Example question:** “I’m always able to access information at the moment I need it.”

Empowerment

Flexibility, autonomy, and similar factors at work. **Example question:** “My workplace is very flexible and lets me work on my terms.”

Engagement

Commitment to work and the organisation. **Example question:** “Workplace technology makes it very easy to collaborate with others.”

Emotional benefits

Feelings of happiness and fulfillment. **Example question:** “I feel highly valued at work.”

This score will be the benchmark for comparison in future years and against other countries. Interestingly, no significant score differences were seen across:

- Gender
- Age
- Metro vs. regional
- Company size

These pillars reflect both practical and more human work concerns. From them we created a series of 20 indicators, with five linking to each of the key connectivity pillars. We then asked 1000 Australian office workers from various industries how much they agreed/disagreed with the indicators and scored their answers.

All research led by an independent third-party research agency, The Insights Grill, to ensure objective and statistically robust results.

The average connectivity score across Australian office workers is **74** out of **100**

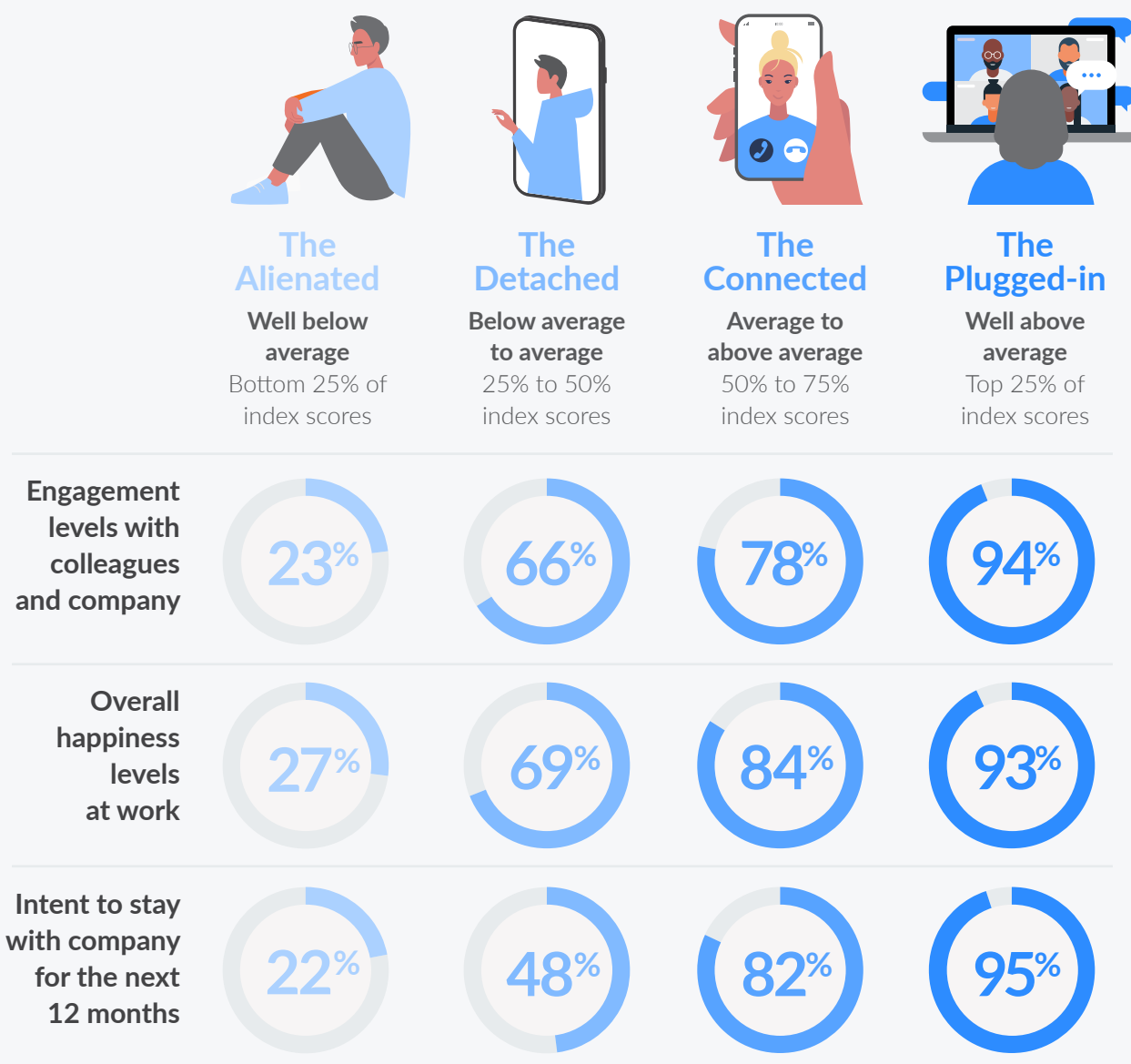
20 indicators x 5 points
per indicator =
100 possible index points

The index tells us how connected people feel, gives us clues as to why, and reveals the benefits and risks of connection.



The connected and the disconnected

To better understand the effect of low connectivity, we have separated participants into four quartiles – from the least to most connected.



Perhaps the most interesting finding here is that the majority of the Detached – who were not at the bottom of the connectivity index, and who are generally happy and engaged at work – are still intending to leave their organisations within 12 months.

This shows how powerful connectivity is. Doing the bare minimum to keep your employees connected with the organisation and with each other is enough to keep them happy and engaged, but they will feel no loyalty to you.

1

Connectivity driver

Flexible work

So what can organisations do to help their employees feel connected? The first driver is offering flexible work. When we segmented the index based on the amount of time people were working from home, we found that staff who were 100% in the office had a below-average index score.

That being said, working entirely from home resulted in just an average score. Only hybrid workers, who were able to work from home and in the office, had above average scores. The pillars that showed the biggest differences were found in empowerment and efficiency.

Working 50-90% from home is better than working 100% from the office

38%
efficiency
increase

82%
empowerment
increase



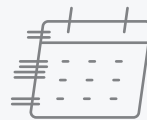
- Efficiency
- Empowerment
- Emotional benefits

When compared to those who work 100% in the office, those who work from both home and the office (hybrid) were:



250%

more likely to say:
"Workplace technology helps me find more time for my health (sleep/exercise)."



169%

more likely to say:
"Meetings are much shorter now, so I have more free time."



95%

more likely to say:
"Workplace technology has helped me balance work and personal life."

2

Connectivity driver

Seniority

Another driver for connectivity was seniority. Business decision-makers have an above-average connectivity score and regular staff workers have a below-average score. Sixty per cent of business decision-makers were Connected or Plugged-in, compared to only 40% of regular staff.

Business decision-makers were also more likely to have been using all of their workplace technologies 12 months ago, likely helping them to weather the disruptions caused by COVID better than others.



51%

use video calls daily
**compared with 34%
of regular staff.**



57%

get to choose
their technology
**compared with 26%
of regular staff.**

○ Engagement

○ Empowerment

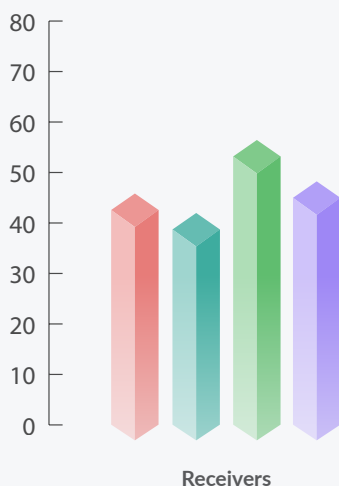
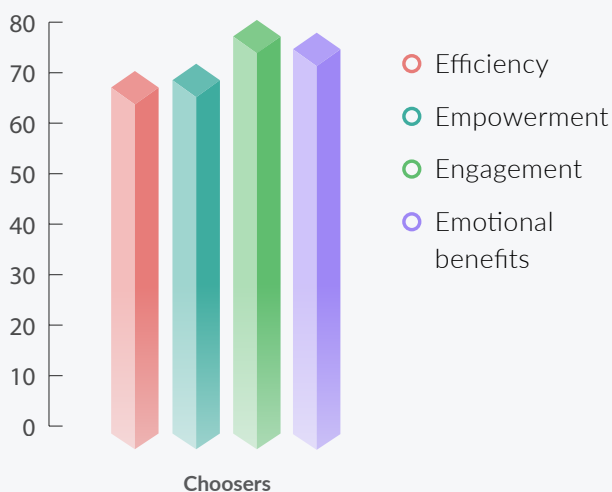


3

Connectivity driver

Choosing technology

There was a big difference between the 47% who say their company lets them “choose whatever technology” they prefer (Choosers) and the 53% who must use the technology they’re given (Receivers). The former scored more highly across all four connectivity pillars.



Compared to Receivers, Tech Choosers were:



61%

more likely to feel **included at work.**



115%

more likely to report **meetings are shorter since COVID.**



271%

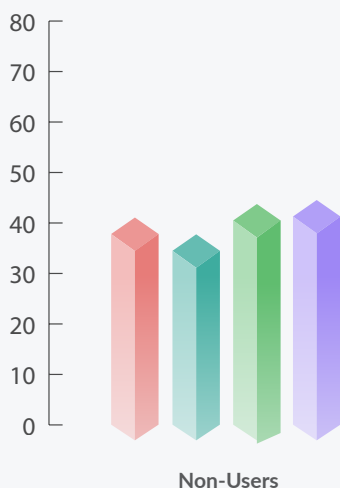
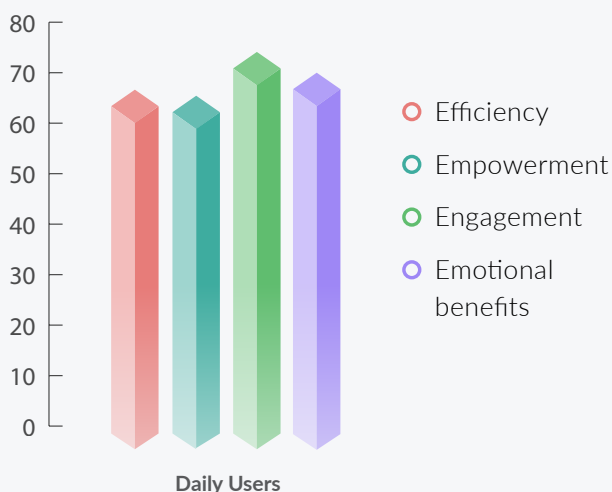
more likely to say **they are happy at work.**

4

Connectivity driver

Technology usage

Despite the widespread feeling that people need to unplug and get away from technology, employees who used technology more frequently at work reported much better outcomes than those who barely used it. This held true across all four connectivity pillars.



When comparing daily tech users to those who never or rarely use tech, daily users were:



23%

more likely to feel they can access and communicate with more senior staff.



49%

more likely to report that they were collaborating well.



50%

more likely to feel technology helps them produce better work.

Helping employees feel more connected

The findings of the index are worth considering and suggest a few ways that businesses can tailor their organisations to maximise connectivity among employees. But before exploring those, it's worth focusing for a moment on the major finding, which is that more connected employees result in better business outcomes.

High connectivity scores were associated with:



Next steps for your organisation:

1

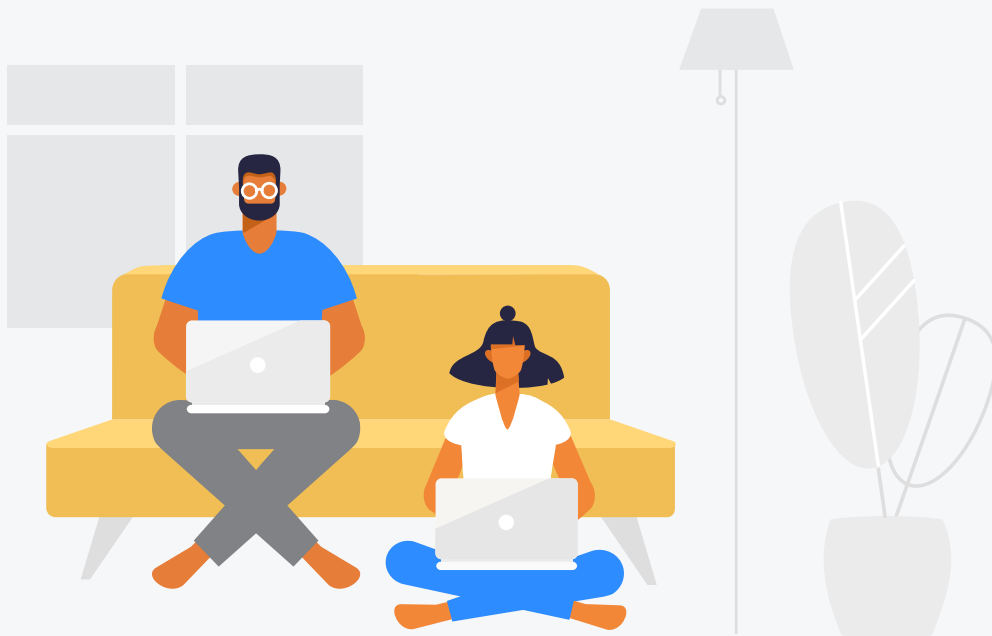
The age of the all-office worker is over

- The findings show that hybrid workers, those who split their time between remote and in-office work, felt the most connected and reported the best work outcomes.
- Even after the pandemic, companies should review their flexible work policies to ensure people not only have the ability to work flexibly, but that they are encouraged to do so when appropriate. That being said, don't take a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Make sure you have the right technology in place beforehand. Don't just assume what you have is what's best.

Unplugged is not the answer

- It's easy to feel overconnected in today's world. But we shouldn't let that fact cloud just how much technology is doing for us.
- The research shows that the more regular technology users felt a lot more connected to their co-workers compared to those who rarely used technology.
- Employers should invest in technology where they can, finding platforms that are easy to use and integrate into their employees' work lives.

2



3

Give your employees the power to choose

- The connectivity report shows that giving your people the ability to choose the technologies they work with drives connectivity and delivers bottom-line results.
- There are a few ways to do this. Conduct employee surveys and test preferences, or initiate pilot programs with rival technologies to see which one works best.

Invest in frontline employees

- The report found that organisations should give the same care and attention to their regular staff as they do decision-makers.
- Conducting pulse surveys and otherwise checking in with frontline staff will tell you whether they are feeling less connected.
- Think more holistically about their experience at work. Is your culture doing what it can to foster connections?
- Engage stakeholders from all levels of the organisation in open discussions about their experiences at work, and why they feel connected and disconnected.

4

Methodology and Demographics

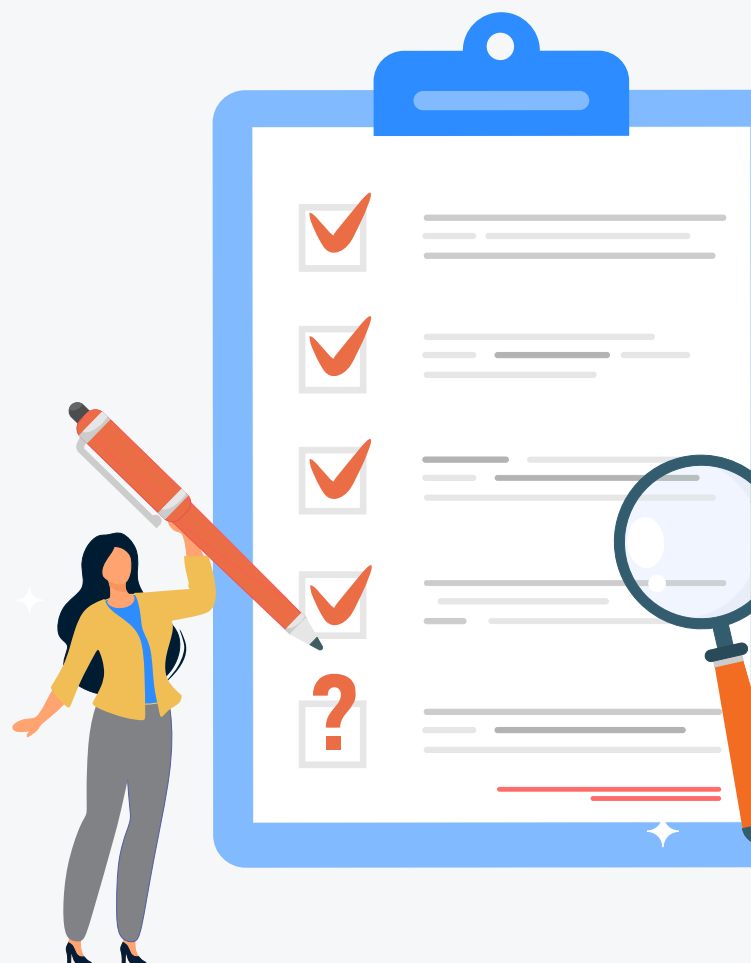
Phase 1: Qualitative and Desk Research

- Conducted desk research among academic and government papers
- Asked 75 Australians what connectivity means to them, the benefits of it, and which technologies are driving connectivity

Phase 2: Nationwide Survey

- Conducted a survey with 1,000 Australian office workers
- Ensured 50/50 gender balance and even mix of 25-65 years old
- Half the sample consisted of senior-level business decisionmakers or influencers. The other half was regular office staff (mid-level and junior).

All research was led by an independent third-party research agency, The Insights Grill, to ensure objective and statistically robust results.





Want to get your employees
feeling more connected?

Contact us

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