

How website filtering affects workplace productivity

Filtering sites across the web is effective at keeping employees on task and reducing security risks for companies. But how much time does web filtering save organisations?

Online distractions not only eat into your working day but also place companies at risk of security threats. Keeping your employees focused by locking down sites should be just part of your [IT strategy](#).

Austin, Tex.-based networking company [Spiceworks](#) carried out a survey examining the use of web filtering in the workplace and the implications of restricting certain online sites.

It polled 645 respondents from organizations across North America and Europe in May 2018.

The [results show that](#) when organizations do not restrict any internet activity, over half of employees (58 percent) spend at least four hours per week, on websites unrelated to their job. This equates to 26 workdays per year.

Based on the [average US salary](#) of \$45,812, these organizations are paying full-time employees approximately \$4,500 per year to spend 10 percent of their time consuming non-work-related web content.

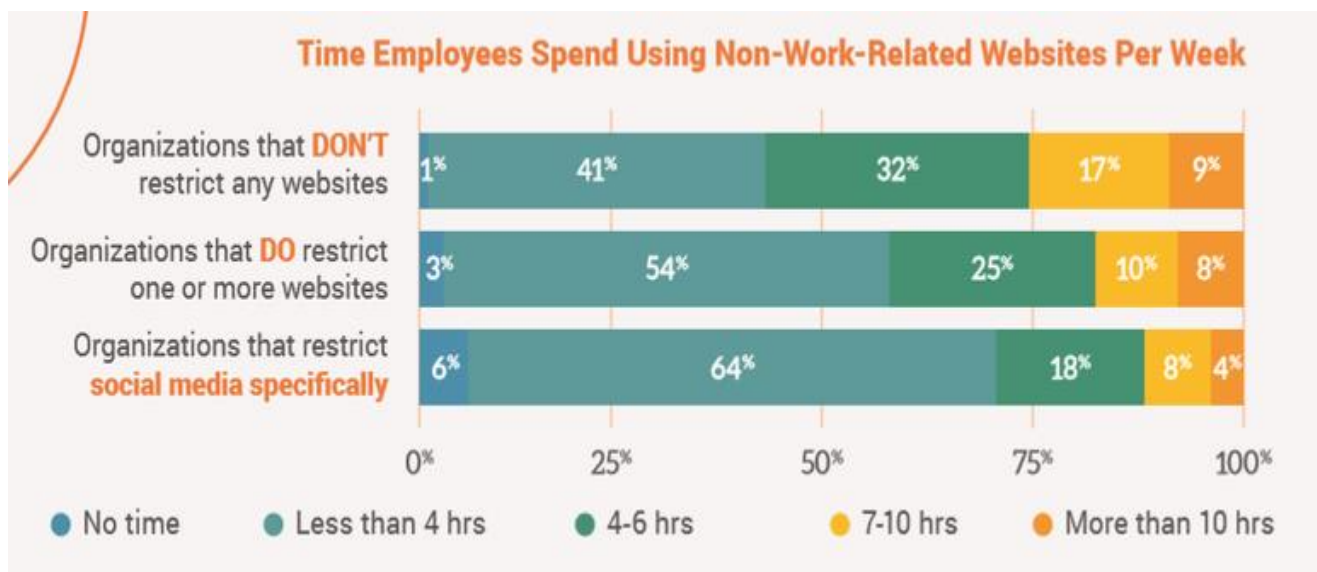


Image: Spiceworks)

Productivity levels in the workplace can peak when social media is restricted on the corporate network.

If organisations restrict social media, specifically under one in three (30 percent) of employees spend at least four hours per week on websites unrelated to their jobs.

When organizations restrict one or more website on the corporate network, 85 percent restrict illegal and inappropriate sites, and 61 percent restrict online dating sites.

The survey showed that [large organizations](#) restrict the most internet activity -- with Facebook, Snapchat, and Instagram as the most commonly blocked social channels.

Across organisations, 36 percent block Facebook, 36 percent block Snapchat, and 35 percent block Instagram. Additionally, 32 percent block Twitter, and 31 percent block Pinterest, but only 16 percent block LinkedIn.

The results suggest more employees are staying on task in larger organizations, where only 28 percent of employees spend more than four hours per week on websites unrelated to their job, compared to 45 percent in mid-size businesses and 51 percent in small businesses.

[Security incidents](#) can also affect productivity. Threats can come from the use of personal webmail services (15 percent) and social media channels (11 percent). But less than 40 percent of organizations block these online properties, which could exacerbate the problem.

Security incidents stemming from illegal (5 percent) or unethical (7 percent) websites were less common during the last 12 months, perhaps because 85 percent of companies block these sites.

Peter Tsai, senior technology analyst at Spiceworks, said:

"It's evident web filtering is effective at keeping employees on task and reducing security risks. But in a world where IT professionals are constantly performing a balancing act between protecting networks and enabling and trusting employees to do their jobs, sometimes it's not possible to block every potentially dangerous website. As a result, web filtering should only be one part of a multi-layered security strategy, instead of being viewed as a cure-all."

Filtering websites will take people off the corporate network and protect the organisation. However, staff will use their personal mobile devices to access any blocked sites.

Although your corporate network is safe, your employees are not focused on the task. You now have a people problem instead of an IT issue.

Source: <https://www.zdnet.com/article/how-website-filtering-affects-workplace-productivity/>
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