



Should Working from Home be Renamed?

WHITE PAPER

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By Dr. James Norrie, Founder & CEO

So much has been written about working from home that even I hesitate to add to the fray during October and Cybersecurity awareness month. That said, I cannot help but be reflective about this topic, as much because I am experiencing it in the same way as many of you and a thought occurs:

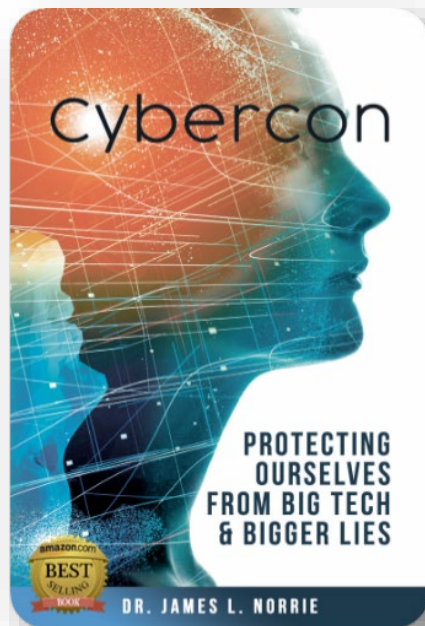
Should we stop calling it “working from home” and instead think about it as “living at work”?

As I have previously pointed out, the psychology of the cues and clues of working from home is **not** the same as going to work. As we venture to the office, plant floor, store, or wherever your workplace is, even as we travel there, we start to adopt our work persona. We leave behind the challenges of our personal lives, the distractions and minutiae of detail that comprise our daily lives at home and cross the threshold to work becoming the “practiced professional” everyone expects. Most of us turn-up and turn it on!

Now, we no longer have that escape. In fact, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of us are now imprisoned in a new purgatory where our personal and professional lives coalesce in such a way as to be inseparable now. Like it or not, we are now living at work! The disruptions and distractions that pop up continually – the appearance of pets and children during online Zoom meetings are an entire online meme now in social media – cannot be easily masked, escaped, or controlled because we no longer have the choice to separate our work and personal lives in distinct places. They occur all the time in the same place at the same time.



So, what has changed? It's not like many of us didn't work from home before, at least occasionally. And some of you all the time. Well...there is now a risk that we are already in a heightened anxious state. The 24H news cycle about the dangers and dilemmas of this virus in our midst naturally causes anxiety. And, if you have read my latest book, then you recognize that this biologically triggers an underlying state of mind called **hypervigilance** that can cause fatigue based complacency in anyone no matter how much we try and deny or control it. This is where the impact on cybersecurity occurs: as you become less vigilant you become more vulnerable. So, what to do?



The first thing we need to do is try and establish control over our environment. Think about ways to create boundaries around where you work at home to deliberately separate yourself from family life while you work if that is possible. You may also think about cute ways of letting family members who are old enough to understand that, while you are at home physically, you are mentally at work. Help them understand that the continuous collision of those two worlds is distracting and difficult to manage.

Another important tactic may be to recognize changes in work patterns that help you focus on the differences in *how* you work instead of *what* you are working on. While the tasks remain the same mostly, the technology, tools and territory in which you are performing the work have likely all changed. What are you doing, in partnership with your company, to alter expectations about workflows, deadlines, and

methods of collaborating that can facilitate doing remote work differently?

Finally, during thousands of hours of applied research, cyberconIQ has learned that each of us behaves differently online. This is a part of our personality and it defines our instincts and impulses online. Because we are working from home – or living at work – most of us will be spending more time online. We believe that foreknowledge of how we are vulnerable online due to our personality is valuable and can help us protect ourselves and develop new habits and patterns to adapt better to these new circumstances. We also believe that organizations have to support employees by providing opportunities to learn more about remote working and its implications on cybersecurity. You can find out more about both of these by visiting us at cyberconIQ.com to get more insight into that.

But that thought brings me around to why bother writing about this in October of all months? The very month we focus on cybersecurity. Well...because I think that Cybersecurity Awareness month is potentially another trap for most of us. During this month, everyone will be bombarded with messages about cybersecurity awareness, including my own company! For marketing purposes, we must participate actively or be displaced by competitors do. However, our brand **never** thinks about improving cybersecurity awareness as a single event but as a continuous educational process. We don't just need to think about this in October but actually from November through September too! But, we must not become anxious and let it overwhelm us. Instead, we need to find ways to feel empowered and safer online by successfully adapting to these new circumstances.



To accomplish that, we all need to help each other out by understanding our own vulnerabilities, feelings, and personal responses to this “new normal” we are all experiencing right now. Because, despite its name, it is not normal so much as it is new. And as with all such abrupt changes in human history, we need time to adapt to this together and to establish new social norms that will help guide us to accomplishing what we all need to overtime. Don’t be rushed – it won’t help. Instead, reflect on yourself and then refine your own responses to this and then reclaim home and stop living at work!



For more information or to learn more about the cyberconIQ solution, please contact us at info@cyberconiq.com