TELEWORK - Penetration, Potential and Practice in Europe

Delia Chiricescu   received the Engineer degree in Computer Science from the Polytechnical Institute of Bucharest in 1988. In 1988 she worked for one year at the Computing Centre of ICMUG Giurgiu. In February 1990 she joined the Research Institute for Informatics in Bucharest as system engineer and programmer. She was on the team which designed and implemented a PAD (Packet Assembly/Disassembly)   on a Videotex network value added service (access point for Videotex pages acquisition, multi-access to Videotex databases). She was also responsible for a www server design and implementation. In 1993 she joined the team maintaining the national EuropaNET node. Currently she prepares her Ph.D thesis.

The possibility of teleworking includes new potential for regional development and interworking among groups of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Europe and worldwide.

This book is a quintessence of the results of **TELDET (Telework Developments and Trends. A Compilation of Information on Telework: Case Studies and Trend Analysis)**, funded by Telework Stimulation Actions of the European Commission DG XIII-B. The project started in January 1994 and was completed in June 1995.

The report includes information on 60 telework case studies, and examines the state-of-the-art, growth trends and major areas of impact for a range of key decision -makers and users and an analysis of the conditions for telework in six different European Union countries. The main objectives of TELDET were to carry out:

- representative European surveys on telework penetration, interest in, potential of and obstacles to telework;

- European case studies on telework practice;

- an analysis of the conditions for telework development in the EC member states.

Thus the data emerging from the project provide the most solid foundation for the development of policy and practice in the telework field in Europe.

The document is structured in **10 main Chapters**. The framework definition of telework as given in **Chapter 0** was meant for covering the whole range of teleworking possibilities. This definition should not inhibit at all so that large-scale representative surveys (General Population Survey and the Decision - Maker Survey) more easily communicate a definition of telework to a respondent.

After an introduction, **Chapter 1** provides information about the background and objectives as well as the different strands of work carried out in the project. A common analytical framework for the execution of the case studies as well as a common case study reporting are adopted to enable national and international comparisons of teleworking practice and of different types of teleworking. This was developed and applied to all of the telework case studies. In order to develop an analytical framework for the empirical investigations within the case studies organisations, the authors had identified, analysed and structured the relevant dimensions of teleworking. These dimensions were packaged in the form of an interview schedule, whose guide contained a set of dimensions and sub-elements along which the case study teleworking schemes could have been analysed.

Expectations and estimates of the **Diffusion** and **Penetration of Telework** are made in **Chapter 2**. The mentioned examples show that the more recent estimates were made, the less optimistic they turned out to be, as the authors discovered that the diffusion of telework would be by way of a rather slow but consistent evolution. The term telework was very clearly and explicitly defined in a way which is easily understandable, more embracing and inclusive than some older definition.

The next chapter (**Chapter 3**) - is a short history of telework since the 1980s - the starting years of the telework phenomenon. The authors felt it essential to compile appropriate information on teleworking from the 1980s onwards in order to generate information on telework trends and to mark a starting point for subsequent work. The chapter starts with a description of the task and occupations of telework which could be identified in the 1980s, and briefly elaborates on

the contractual relationships most dominant in those days and provides an in-depth analysis of the motivation and attitudes towards telework by the main actors concerned with it. It continues with a description of the driving forces of telework from an individual, organisational and societal perspective and an analysis of the penetration and development trends in the 1980s.

Chapter 4 "The Spread of Telework in the mid-1990s" provides a reliable and representative empirical basis telework survey of decision- makers in organisations in Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain, conducted in mid-1994. The data are compared to the surveys carried out in 1985 by Huws, Korte and Robinson, allowing an analysis of developments over almost a decade.

Chapter 5 "Telework Potential: Current Supply and Demand for Telework" deals with the issues of the supply of teleworking arrangements from employers and the potential demand for teleworking from employees. In the first section information is provided on the knowledge of and information sources concerning telework which indicated the level of awareness of this new form of work organisation among the population. The second section elaborates on the current supply and demand aspects of telework both at a general level and also broken down by a range of factors such as industrial sector and size of the organisation.

Comprehensive information on the telework practice in Europe and the findings from almost 60 European telework case studies are provided in **Chapter 6**. 30 of the case studies are provided as an annex (Annex 1) for readers interested in obtaining further details.

Chapter 7 is an analysis of the conditions for telework in Europe in almost all EC member states. Whenever possible, it differentiates between national, regional and municipal level activities and programmes and those of the national PTTs and telecommunications network

providers. It focuses on policies which deal more or less directly with the subject of telework, and have an impact on the development of telework. The material for this chapter has been taken from a longer report produced by the TELDET project.

An elaboration of the trends in Telework development is given in **Chapter 8**. This chapter outlines a number of general trends in the political and social economy and in technology which will affect the development in the near- to- medium future. It addresses 5 issues - developments in technology, developments in relation to the tasks and occupations now being undertaken via telework, moves by companies and government agencies towards decentralisation, the role of Government and the social partners and finally, the organisational forms of teleworking.

Finally, **Chapter 9** draws some conclusions. It is save to state that there has not been an explosion of telework yet, though there is currently an explosion of interest in the topic. At the same time, evolutionary growth continues towards a variety of organisational forms of telework.

The book, written by Werner B. Korte (Empirica GmbH, Germany) and Richard Wynne (the Work Research Centre Ltd, Ireland) with contributions from Spain, France, Finland, Denmark and Italy, is an overview of the progress of telework in 1994-1995 in the EU member states .

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