

# STUDY ON LABOR CHARACTERISTICS IN NETWORK ECONOMY

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## *Abstract*

*E-Business revolution takes place anywhere on the globe, the whole world is connected; many small businesses of today can become tomorrow leaders of the global market; the whole world will benefit from every word that has added an „e”. Internet development has been one of the most effective creations of the human mind, by that both individuals and companies can be in direct connection without the constraints of space and time. The new economy has produced radical changes in the company, both in terms of carrying out the activities and in the nature of labor relations, with profound implications on work and life styles of people.*

*In this paper we wanted to emphasize the changes produced of the work styles achieved along the development of information and communication technologies. Thus we have shown labor paradigm changes in the XXI century, features and benefits of teleworking, the types of work that can be done via the Internet, an overview of the most used platforms for remote work, stressing the importance of teamwork virtual.*

*Key words: network economy, flexible working, teleworking, freelancer, virtual teams*

## **1. Introduction**

In the Information Society, developing and implementing information and communication technology has led to the emergence of a new digital economy, net economy, which tends to globalize worldwide. Due to the emergence of many information technologies, changes occurred both in society and in the companies, because it was noticeably increased the working speed and quality of service. All start from the man and spreads rapidly through quick technology by himself, thus overbidding individual behavior.

In the period 2010-2014, the wage policy of a number of companies in Romania was characterized by a degree of rigidity that led to the reduction of employees (Iordache, SC, Militaru, M., Pandioniu, 2015).

According to an analysis by Market Watch magazine (2015), technological developments will trigger dramatic changes in the DNA of the business concept and company, which will set new conditions workplace of the future. Information society through the development of a particularly fast pace of IT technologies provides employees the opportunity not to be bound by the

daily presence at a company office, but to work wherever they are.

The changes made in society led to remarkable changes to the companies that put their mark on the classical mechanism of work organization, respectively employment based on an individual employment contract of indefinite duration, full-time and schedule work which is replaced by new forms of employment more flexible, which can bring real benefits for both the employer and the employee (<http://www.bizbrasov.ro>, 2016).

In information society, to be performing companies should consider increasing adaptability and mobility of employees, promoting flexible forms of work organization, specific vocational training and health and safety at work. Worldwide radical changes occur in the way of work.

Teleworking, is a style of possible work in most European countries, but in Romania although it is accepted in a range of companies not yet regulated by the legislation in force ([stirileprotv.ro](http://stirileprotv.ro), 2015). The great advantage of this type of work is that employees can work from anywhere, on bosses are not interested where they working, the main it is compliance the deadline for completion of the work. In this way, employees can be more productive when they want working and how many hours they want. There may however be risks for both employee (boss can give him a volume too much work and get him imposes too short terms, or to distinguish from those who are at work) and employer (employees can not work enough).

Requirements for the mobile workforce, flexible and more skilled are in accelerated increase. In this context, one of the most important issues is changing the traditional concept about work, based on visibility and spatial placement in buildings and offices, in a

new concept based on the mobility, flexibility, creativity and motivation of the workforce. Starting in 1998 with the advent of the work platform "E lance", "oDesk" and "freelancer.com" telework has become increasingly flexible, but at the same time very well paid especially to the people of countries less developed.

The job market is becoming more competitive and to get a good job requires an effort of continuous improvement and development.

## **2. Changing the work paradigms in the XXI century**

The concept of "work" is broader than the quantitative, qualitative aspects or those relating to unemployment. Today it includes work transforming, work organization system transformation and of structural characteristics of the labor market.

A theoretical framework on the functioning of the labor market has developed relatively recently with the central element, the search for employment / a suitable candidate (Diamond, 1982; Mortensen, 1982; Pissarides, 1985, 2000).

Work is undergoing profound changes - in companies, in outside of companies, changes at the administrations level, and changes in the areas of interweaving of the autonomous work with that of subordinated structures.

Today we are witnessing at changing work paradigms and replacing traditional paradigm of work which has the following characteristics:

- permanent employees (employment for life) on a contractual basis of work;
- Standard work program (from the "8-16" or "9-17");

- full-time employment (40-45 hours / week);

- State social insurance;
- Jobs placed within a building;
- Intra-organizational cooperation based on work meetings with employees, while external contacts are limited and performed only a certain number of employees;

with the new trends:

- ✓ Increased number of freelancers;

- ✓ Increasing the number of small and medium companies and instability of human resources at their level;

- ✓ Extension of the flexible work as alternative to "work program permanent with full time";

- ✓ Introduce ways of "teleworking".

The companies will have to accept the "teleworking" or will lose from competitiveness. In the context of the emergence of new ways of working, are witnessing at increasing labor mobility and at increase of opportunities for short- and medium-term work, at working to boost growth opportunity based on all available and emerging opportunities.

The concept of "lifelong career" is replaced by "portfolio careers" because of diversify activities, increasing professional and occupational mobility and flexibility.

In Europe, governments have realized the necessity of changing, due to structural changes in the labor market and its flexibility.

It observes that work is changing continuously due to the increasing number of small and medium enterprises with few employees for specified periods, but extending flexible working hours, and increasing the number of freelancers.

After all studies, is certain conclusion, as teamwork is a

competence that is found in requirements for almost every available job for a company that wants to reach at performance. Teamwork can lead to a number of advantages, that is materialized in the creating a climate positive affective - team members they end up to know each other better, working together to overcome the current difficulties and achieve performance.

### 3. Characteristics of work in the information age

In the global society, companies are facing an increasing challenge with need to meet a market increasingly dynamic and unpredictable, leading to the adoption of measures (restructuring of companies and the introduction of autonomous teams that are responsible for their own performance, implementation of employee self-evaluation methods; stimulate thinking flexible) that ensure a more flexible mindset for all employees.

Flexible working hours seems to be the dream of every employee, but not of any employer. But how society is changing and people's expectations is transformed, gradually we move towards a fully flexible future where organizations increasingly recognize the benefits of a program more flexible for employees. The technology accelerates change. Business meetings are held in the online environment, and mobile networks contribute to employee involvement in activities wherever and whenever necessary.

Given the challenges of the 21st century is based on the unprecedented evolution of information and communication technologies, companies must revisit the relationship with employees and offer flexible working conditions, which could lead to facilitate the creation of new jobs and encouraging

of forms of transition from one job to another on the labor market by allowing employees to combine their needs.

Flexibility of working hours of employees envisages both program flexibility and of the workplace, which can mean a program chosen according to the needs of employees (continuous, in shifts or schedule on certain days or weeks) or the work from home or on the go.

With the development of communications technologies, teleworking has become a reality for more and more employers and employees. Thus, in 2011, the European Union about 18 % of employed persons performing such kind of work. The record level of up to 30 % of the total workforce engaged teleworking have been Finland, Sweden, Belgium. Experts have recognized the advantages, mainly a better balance of the work with family life, until the economic advantages for companies. Fundamentally, increasing the weight of telework is primarily a cultural shift in the management of companies, employees and not least of the activities that lend themselves to such treatment (gandestepprofitabil.ro)

In 2012, 16.7 % of French employees (nearly 4 million people) have worked at least one day a week outside the office, increasing significantly compared to 2011, when only 12.7 % use teleworking at least one day a week (Le Figaro, 2012).

In Romania, in 2012, 27 % of companies have allowed employees to work from home, but most Romanian employers which using teleworking (66 %) does not grant this freedom for a higher percentage of 30 % of their employees (REALITY.NET, 2012).

Although relatively new known in our country, the concept of teleworking was first used in the early 70's, during the oil crisis, when Jack Nilles at the University of South Carolina suggested

that information technologies have the ability to substitute physical movement through electronic communications. Since then, along with the evolution of technologies, teleworking grew, and were given a lot of definitions for it. Officer with teleworking issues within the European Community, Peter Johnston, defines teleworking as "a way of organizing work that relies on the use of electronic equipment for the processing and exchange of information and documents" (Cochinescu, C., 2009).

Analyzing the concept of teleworking etymologically, it comes either from telecommuting (teleworking using ICT) defined by the European Community, or from term teleworking preferred by the US. Teleworking is considered an abstract concept, in the context of variety of other options for working remotely (Rosca I., G., Stoica, M., 2010).

Teleworking can be defined as "a form of work organization through which employees using information technologies, fulfilling the duties of the office, occupation or profession they hold in a place other than the employer's office or residence, as appropriate". More broadly, teleworking can be defined as a flexible way of working that involves a range of activities carried out in mostly away from the employer and traditional place of work. Tele-employees will be able to determine own work schedule and the employer can verify their work under conditions established by individual or collective labor contract. Tele-employees will benefit from the same rights as employees working at the employer premises (realitateabucuresti.ro).

Teleworking work being carried out by an individual who is in a remote location of headquarters, which do not involve direct contact between he and

his colleagues / collaborators, is dependent on information, work is not a prerequisite, but are essential the channels of communication and access at these.

Teleworking provides employees flexibility on the job, leading to a clever use of office space and reduce costs (approximately 16%). The forms of teleworking can be classified as: work at home and outside the home. Teleworking is associated usually the activities at that inputs / outputs are information, and results can be transmitted through ICT components (Rosca, I., Gh., Stoica, M., 2005).

The main ways of expressing telework, considering the degree of freedom of the employee are: teleworking occasional teleworking semi-mobile, teleworking with random schedule, teleworking at home and teleworking with total mobility.

**Occasional teleworking** involves people working mainly at headquarters and only occasionally (one day per week, for example) at home. This type of teleworking was the first way to work with important advantages, risk and minimal investment, and it is often encountered in the research, design, scheduling, accounting, etc. This form of teleworking has the advantage of flexibility as against classical work, which leads to increased productivity of individual labor. Also, by occasionally working at home can decrease maintenance costs.

**Semi mobile teleworking** is the following form in evolution of teleworking that offers greater mobility of employees as against fixed workplace, but still involves a permanent connection with it, according to a schedule. In this form of work the employees have mobile phone and laptop computer and when working at the company are distributed where is

space available at that time. No is a work very often used due to organizational issues, managerial, psychosocial and adaptation. Has the disadvantage that employees are not sentimental tied to a job physically, have a low degree of safety and comfort, not have too much contact with colleagues, which can lead to a decrease in productivity.

**Teleworking with random schedule** involves a combination of work done at home with the one at the firm or its clients, in certain proportions. Thus, employees moving to work according to the current needs have assigned tasks. Not having a fixed place of work in the company, thus, those who provide such work should announce in advance when they want to come to the firm, to be prepare a proper job. This kind of work is being used more and more to the big companies, because they confer advantages of reducing traffic, travel time, transport costs. All these benefits contribute to profit growth and labor productivity, lowering costs and eliminating stress, increasing employee satisfaction.

**Tele-home working** involving workplace organization at home with amenities on that involves the work done at the expense of the company. This form of work is specific to the service companies, having as the advantages the flexibility of employee working hours and reduced expenses for maintenance of a home office than to maintain an office at the company. It is work usually practiced by people who for one reason can not leave home (mothers with young children, people who take care of elderly, etc.).

Tele-home working can be part-time and full-time and off-line (it connecting to the corporate network only if they need to transfer and upload

files, or to check email, etc.) or online (permanent connecting at working network). Tele-home working has a number of advantages and disadvantages:

 advantages:

- voluntary choice of the time period for carrying out the work;
- employee performing activity without being disturbed, thus he has not the conflict with colleagues or superiors;
- better use of available time and eliminating the transportation costs;
- a high degree of satisfaction due to the possibility of intertwining of work with family responsibilities;

 disadvantages:

- insulation of work colleagues and working social groups;
- allocating too long to work;
- not benefit from the night spore, weekend or holidays;
- unable to take a sick leave because the work should be done;
- evaluate the work and performance, not done concomitantly with their recognition;
- does not guarantee workplace standards, possibility of equipment failure or loss of information;
- negative influences on privacy.

Teleworking with total mobility requires that employees to perform their work elsewhere than at headquarters (at clients, in car) where they can accomplish their mobile office. This form of work is characterized by information mobility that are transmitted through communications technology, especially lately by portable equipment (tablet, smartphone, printer, portable fax), being specific of companies that sell products through their employees without retail stores, customer-supplier relationship is more direct and beneficial to both parties. Is the preferred type of employees because

do not feel the constant pressure of work (to) office.

Generally companies choose several forms of teleworking, creating a blend between them and classical work, depending on the nature of the activities, the specific conditions of the geographical area where they are and the structure of the personnel involved.

Virtual Office is considering a wide variety and range of teleworking areas of expression, from an occasionally level, where the employee spends most of the time working at the firm, until the level of total mobility, where the employee provides services from anywhere, without being present at the company. Virtual Office involves making real-time work, on specialized platforms. As advantages be distinguished the reduced costs and the benefits of employees, and as disadvantages is noted relatively weak contact with the company and its environment, gaps in communication with other workers and a difficult access to material resources. Although teleworking is not yet developed on a large scale for certain the activities categories and certain specialized employees, it is an attractive alternative and convenient for both parties.

#### **4. Flexible work platforms remotely**

The evolution of communication technologies and data transfer led to the possibility of the telework in the team or not, being able to provide labor and sends the information resulting from its own tablet, the mobile phone, laptop, anywhere in the world.

Teleworking offers autonomy, flexibility, diversity, collaboration, experimentation. According to the results of a global survey on teleworking advantages in terms of

employee satisfaction (Market Watch, 2015), it was found that only one in five employee believes it has satisfactory autonomy and power to influence, and leaders divide decision and authority with their team members.

Any manager wants to have a well-trained employee and therefore he makes every effort to assure them satisfactions to keep him in team. Thanks to advances from the field of technology permanent appear solutions that offer the possibility to conduct a work that him satisfy and motivate the employee. It is noticeable that people in the digital age communicate digital, hold communication modern technologies (smartphones, tablets). In this regard, appear natural the action a firm to acquire a social platform for human resources management, to ensure an optimization of the activities performed by employees and partner communities and implicit, increasing employee satisfaction and improving employer brand.

If until a few years ago, about what a freelancer not know much, except by bloggers world, today becomes an option the increasingly sought. People, depending on the knowledge and experience accumulated search for new alternatives and opportunities for work. The most prevalent form of telework is through working platforms.

People who work through these platforms are called freelancers, they usually work from their homes and either already have a job, and in leisure time will try to raise savings through these platforms, or are people who simply love to be their own 'boss', and work on their own.

"Freelancer is an independent person who works both in online and offline. Does not have boss, does not have a schedule, but still always needs to be

your own boss, meaning that you have to be disciplined, organized and in a permanent race of self-improvement "(<http://www.aisucces.ro> / -de- home-freelancing business-to-elance-in-romania/).

Freelancing is a form of work which, although it can be done at home, involves a lot of responsibility, discipline and professionalism.

This kind of thing has taken great momentum in recent years and is increasingly used by absolutely anyone who has access to computers and the Internet, and has the necessary knowledge to activate in this work area. But it is established that not every type of work can be done via the Internet. And so these kinds of job, have in turn a relatively restricted area of work. Among the most widespread forms of work through these platforms are:

- Create websites;
- Create specialized software for computers;
- Create specialized software for mobile phones;
- Create specialized software for different operating systems;
- Design, media and architecture;
- Graphic design;
- Illustrations;
- Drafting academic content;
- Drafting content books;
- Desktop Publishing;
- Technical Writing;
- Translations.

These are just some forms of work, each branch having to turn other branches, the possibilities are almost limitless. Most freelancers in Romania working on design, copywriting, web, SEO marketing consulting and business, however, are many that offering services and offline.

Work as a freelancer has a number of advantages and disadvantages. Among advantages we

can mention the gain, how much more will the work will win more, work time allocate it as they please, being their own boss. Assuming that money is an advantage, sometimes it can be considered a disadvantage, because the gains are differentiated, and sometimes you might not win anything. Always a freelancer must be in search of customers, and if it is not a good communicator is a big disadvantage. Next will be presented 12 sites where it can work as a freelancer, where it can find customers on different areas (<http://laurentiumihai.ro/castiga-bani-ca-freelancer/>).

1. Freelancer.com - one of the largest online freelancing platforms, where are over 4 million jobs for freelancers, and there are more than 7 million enrolled freelancers. Employee's payment varies by type of activity from 3 euros to a few hundred euros. It is very easy for those with experience in this area of work, but also very deceptive and heavy on the other hand to newcomers. Work on these platforms involves two broad categories. The first category refers to listing the various jobs by employers on this platform, every freelancer being forced to place an offer to work on the project. Every employer who displays the project must first establish its budget, it can pay before thus the total project value will be transferred to the employee to complete the project. Whether after it chooses the budget, each freelancer in part is forced to bid, and the offer which seems the best of the employer will be accepted. The second category relates to so-called competitions. These types of projects are some of the most widespread. The employer as well as in the first category can not guarantee its win. The difference between the two is that at the participation of those contests, any freelancer can enter

directly in competition to win amount. The winner is chosen by the employer when he is fully satisfied with what created one of freelancers. The biggest possible advantage is undoubtedly, work on their own, at any hour, at anytime. Another advantage is that you can choose projects, with no compulsion in choosing something. If freelancers already have a job, they can work in free time either as a hobby or to obtain additional income. One of the biggest drawbacks could be not paying on time, and it can add insulation.

2. Congrazie.ro (freelancers community in Romania) - a platform of freelancing jobs of the most useful, being 100 % FREE, which provides jobs in various fields (online marketing, content writing, web, etc.).

3. Microjoburi.ro is a platform where they can promote all services (online: drafting articles, facebook page administration, etc. and offline: walking the dog, cleaning, shopped, etc.) that it can accomplish by a freelancer for 50 lei. The freelancer by adding a microjob, will be promoted on social networks and will be notified when appears a buyer and the discussion will move on working chat to complete microjob after the will of the customer. Microjob is good and from posture of the buyer because it is simple to use, finds the desired microjob, ordering, it pays the microjob and then communicates on working chat with the seller and receives microjob ordered. An assessment can be made to the seller about ordered microjob.

4. Elance.com, a leading global at home work market offers collaboration of the Romanian freelancers on branch of IT, design, copywriting and multimedia with countries like USA, Australia, England and Canada.

5. Crowdsprings.com is a dedicated platform of the designers,

where freelancers compete for the realization of several variants, and the buyer will choose whichever likes the most. It is recommended for freelancers that have more free time and are spontaneous natures, always wanting to self-improvement.

6. Fiverr.com is foreign version of microjoburi.ro. platform, which includes a wide range of online and offline services, Romanians can not only access online services.

7. Rowriters.com (Romanian platform), Constant-content.com, articlesale.com (foreign sites) - are specific platforms for copywriters who are looking for jobs.

8. Odesk.com, it is a platform similar to Freelancer.com and Elance.com where you can apply for logo design, wordpress, website development, mobile applications, SEO and Content Writing.

9. Freelancers.net, is a platform for Britain, but freelancers can apply worldwide, making the connection between British companies and foreign freelancers.

10. Guru.com is free for both freelancers and companies. What a remark of other platforms is ensuring the safety of payment for freelancers.

11. Suplo.ro, it is one of the largest in Romania microjob sites. It is totally free and offers a wide variety of jobs: translations, SEO, content writing, marketing online, photography and more.

12. ClubuldeMeditatii.ro, as the name implies, is a platform for meditators, which helps find potential students or students. It is sufficient as freelancer to require a prompt to promote services.

### **5. Working in virtual teams**

In conditions of globalization, it can carry a number of interrelated

activities by a group of people who are in different locations with different organizational cultures and traditions, but forming a virtual community or platforms that allow sharing the information jointly of the group information. In forming an efficient team is very important that work quality people ultimately depends on the degree of satisfaction of customers with demands increasingly higher.

The companies are considering various strategies of virtual work because it is a way that allowed the flexibility needed in a market in a fast-changing. Virtual work must have appropriate management that to effectively manage and environmental information that enabling the conduct of the participants labor, better communication and collaboration between them. Team members, working collaboratively, but they work autonomously, they take decisions independently of the others, leading to performance through expertise, their knowledge and their wisdom.

Virtual teams are teams whose collaboration transcends time differences, geographical distance and organizational barriers through the use of new communication technologies (Lipnack and Stamps, 1999).

It can contain two or more people who collaborate to achieve common goals, while at least one member working in one location, organization or different time zone, so communication and coordination to be achieved predominantly through a electronic communication environment (Martin, Gilson and Maynard, 2004).

In the context of the new economy, "net economy", collaborative work processes are changing, becoming virtual, operating in virtual working groups "workgroup" using specific tools and technologies (groupware,

Enterprise Resource Planning, Documents Management Systems etc.).

Conducting collaborative work in the traditional system involves a fixed number of members of the firm who are wholly dedicated to the work, have moments clearly defined of beginning and end of teamwork and are driven by a single manager.

At the level of a virtual team there are a variable number of members who can be from inside and outside the company that may make be part simultaneously from several teams, being distributed from an organizational standpoint and geographically. Composition of virtual team can be permanently updated according to the market dynamics. Depending on certain moments of unfolding their work, there are multiple relationships with different departments of the company.

Virtual teams offer flexibility, lower costs and improved utilization of resources necessary to meet the ever changing tasks in a global environment, complex and dynamic business. A virtual team can be defined as a temporary working group with a high degree of cultural diversity, geographically dispersed and who communicate using electronic means of communication. Temporary aspect refers to the possibility that members should not have ever worked together and will never work together again as a group (Ghilic - Micu, B., M. Stoica, 2003).

The existence of virtual teams within companies bring thereof a number of benefits by developing effective practices that enable knowledge use and distribution of professional communities, reducing or eliminating transport costs, rents, increasing collaboration at all levels, encouraging participation in new projects beyond company boundaries. Team members are recruited on the

basis of their competence, from any geographical area.

To streamline activity, managers of such teams can use various software applications that streamline workflow. Of these, the most used us can mention (manager.ro, 2014):

1. Asana is an intuitive platform, mobile which simplifies the process of managing and involves collaboration with employees seconded to other locations and freelancers working for the company.

2. Sqwiggle, is a platform that enables external employees to connect to discussions via VOD (video on demand). Managers can see when the employee works. At every ten seconds is displayed employee's photo, and when want to connect module video, make click on the picture.

3. ONTRAPORT allows the use of "autopilot" for achieving automation from payment at CRM systems. Remote management activity is possible using the function set-it-and-forget-it.

4. Acunote is a platform that provides a system for managing the entire business process, from telework, following the steps of a project, providing thus, each employee the position at any time. Thus, the employer by monitoring system offered by Acunote pursues tasks of each and evolution thereof.

5. ProofHQ enables all employees to have information following the depositing on the server and analyze projects in various stages.

6. Basecamp is project management platform that provides support for managing projects and employees working remotely.

7. 10.000ft - through this platform, the teams collaborate in real time, being able to monitor budgets, availability and time invested in a

project, which leads to providing an overview of their work.

8. Insightly is a platform that integrates monitoring professional duties with powerful tools of CRM (customer relationship management), providing a flexible schedule, pursuing course of events, the possibility of a quick searches.

9. Hall enables alerting on mobile devices of the employees working remotely, so employees are always involved and can collaborate easily and efficiently.

10. Teambox is a modern tool, which provides a remote work teams a simple interface with numerous useful functions for any team of employees.

## 6. Conclusions

In the digital economy, in a global world held a series of important changes in the companies and implicitly on the nature of work carried out, focusing on thinking and creation. The labor market will mark a substantial change in favor of teleworking, liberalization and globalization of information and communication.

In the information society when globalization affects every component of economic and social life, virtual collaborative work becomes a basic prerequisite for a modern company, strongly interconnected which adapts to market dynamics and business environment. Virtual team is constituted to achieve a defined objective in which each member has a well established role with responsibilities that flow from it. Virtual Team Manager will have to coordinate the work of members providing information transparency and managing collaboration between members, fructifying the knowledge and

experience of each and ensuring a permanent feedback.

Collaborative work in the companies has changed along with the need for firms to integrate into the new economy, network economy. In a global economy, collaborative relationships can not remain only within the company but must also extend outside of it, focusing on harnessing knowledge and experience of the members.

In a world where globalization is becoming more present it is logical to expect at further exponential increase teamwork virtual, switching to other versions of interconnection, a new broadcast communication flow at the individual level. This phenomenon has some risks and challenges (currently perhaps less obvious): technology is not a panacea and communication speed does not automatically lead to shortening of a project, on the other hand by atomizing of responsibilities increases the importance of interconnectivity and distribution of the information.

The arrangements for horizontal cooperation coexist with local forms of organization (vertical). If in the classic paradigm, 90% of a manager time is dedicated to communication, in a virtual team a relevant percentage should include distributing, timely electronic information allocation (through virtual agents) at all interested in a stream of clear information on the roles, tasks (tasks), approvals, response times, escalation, evaluating of results, etc. In a not too distant future virtual teamwork will become so widespread that will create other addictions, relationships, a different approach and structuring of certain activities.

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