



## **HP Guide to Avoiding Info-Mania**

The abuse of “always-on” technology has led to a nationwide state of “Info-Mania” where UK workers are literally addicted to checking email and text messages during meetings, in the evening and at weekends. Mobile technology offers massive productivity benefits when used responsibly, but inappropriate use can be negative.

This guide will help you decide if you are one of the growing number of Info-Maniacs in the UK and provide hints and tips on how to deal with your information overload.

**The guide to 'Info-Mania' has been published by Hewlett-Packard  
in association with Dr Glenn Wilson, Reader in Personality at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London**

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## 1. What is Info-Mania

The abuse of “always-on” technology has led to a nationwide state of “Info-Mania” where UK workers are literally addicted to checking email and text messages during meetings, in the evening and at weekends. Mobile technology offers massive productivity benefits when used responsibly, but inappropriate use can be negative.

New research\*, commissioned by technology experts Hewlett Packard, reveals that 62% of adults are addicted to checking messages during meeting, after office hours and on holiday. Half of workers will respond to an email immediately or within 60 minutes and one in five people are “happy” to interrupt a business or social meeting to respond to an email or telephone message.

This guide will help you decide if you are one of the growing number of Info-Maniacs in the UK and provide hints and tips on how to deal with your information overload.

Use the quiz on the next page to see if you or any of your colleagues might be suffering from Info-Mania. Please also take a look at our handy tips and tricks to help avoid info-mania and increase productivity.

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## 2. Are you an Info-Maniac?

	Yes	No
Do you feel anxious if you haven't checked your voicemail or email for a few hours?		
Does the thought of turning your email off for any length of time make you feel out of the loop?		
Are you the person on the train who calls the office every 10 mins to check messages and give your ETA?		
Do you log on to email or check voice messages after hours and at weekends?		
Have you ever checked messages whilst on holiday?		
Do you secretly (or openly) check and send emails during meetings or dinner/lunch?		
Do you 'just have to check messages' before going to an hour long meeting?		
Do you check for new messages within one minute of leaving a meeting?		
If you hear a message arrive on your iPAQ, mobile or email do you have to check it immediately?		
Do you seem to spend more time reading, responding to and forwarding email (and answering calls) than you spend actually doing what you need to do?		

**If most of your answers are 'Yes' go to the next page...**

**Yes?**

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If you answered mainly yes to the above questions you are probably one of the many Info-Maniacs in the UK. You should assess how you use your technology and try and use it in a more appropriate way that will bring prove more efficient and beneficial. Use the hints and tips on the next page below to learn how you can be more productive.

## So, what's the problem?

Info-Mania has a negative effect on colleagues and the work environment, increasing stress and negative feelings. 89% of workers think their colleagues are extremely rude and distracted if they answer emails or messages during a face to face meeting.

Further research within HP confirmed that team members also find Info-Maniacs disruptive and distracting to everyone in the meeting room, including the presenter. Such behaviour was resoundingly voted inconsiderate and as rude as holding a conversation in the meeting. By following just some of the hints and tips below every person can make a real positive difference to their working environment and team morale.

## 3. Hints & Tips to improve your productivity

### Email

- Use subject headers that will help your audience prioritise responses by indicating actions and timeframes for completion. For example, 'John – For action this morning – quarterly figures needed,' or 'Kate/Pete – FYI no action – information from planning meeting'
- Set dedicated daily email time. This will allow you time to concentrate on actually dealing with email without being distracted. This could be at the start and end of every day or whatever suits you
- Cut down on sending unnecessary one word emails to colleagues, such as those that just say 'thanks'
- Plan ahead when sending emails and send one email where possible rather than five separate emails
- Try not to focus on just clearing email or queries from an inbox without being aware of the quality of the responses
- Include the important focus of the email at the top to save those who receive it having to scroll through a lengthy email chain

### Be proactive

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- Use dead travelling time to deal with messages, for example working on the way to and from work. Some HP workers believe they are up to 20-30% more productive by doing this
- If you need an immediate response from someone, try using another more appropriate technology – this might not be email but could be text or Instant Message
- Consider your productivity objectively. Working longer hours does not necessarily make you more productive. Consider giving yourself a deadline to leave the office on time twice a week. Working to a strict deadline can often result in higher productivity
- Work from home if possible when you need to clear backlogs. Avoid falling into the idea of 'presenteeism.' People can be productive when working away from the office. If working from home is not possible – consider taking some time in a meeting room to be away from distractions

### Dealing with others

- Set expectations when you are out of the office or just unavailable. For example, if you can set 'out of office' messages use these even if you are not on holiday but in a meeting for some time. This will set expectations and remove some of the pressure for instant response
- Have as many face-to-face conversations as possible. There is an improved experience for all involved and less opportunity for confusion. This also avoids 'fire and forget' culture and helps to close off tasks faster
- Take yourself offline if necessary. This does not need to be for a lengthy time, but can provide an opportunity to deal with a vital task

### Meetings

- Create rules for meeting environments. For example, the HP SME team have made a rule that in all meetings iPAQs should be turned off and laptop lids closed. Similarly, if it is absolutely necessary to take a mobile phone call, try to apologise to all others present for the disruption
- Invite only the relevant people to a meeting. Attendees who feel that the meeting is not relevant to them are more likely to multi task to get some value from the time away from their desks
- Run meetings more strictly and keep them on track. Other options include the setting of rules to help meetings run faster, for example, set a 20 minute deadline for all meetings or hold meetings standing up
- Resist the temptation to multi task in meeting using a laptop or iPAQ. It is more than likely that there is not full concentration on either the meeting or the job that is being multi tasked

## 4. Summary

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As part of its Smart Office initiative HP is committed to helping businesses understand and benefit from the full potential of technology, thereby helping to improve their employees productivity, work life balance and the morale as a company as a whole.

Mobile technology offers massive productivity benefits in the hands of those who know how to use it but irresponsible use means that workers are becoming addicted to accessing information and are not realising the benefits that they should. By using the technology available in a more appropriate way, both employees and employers will see increased benefits. Employees can experience an improved work life balance, a reduction of stress, better performance at work and an improved work environment. Additionally, employers can expect to see increased productivity from a more motivated workforce, reduced absenteeism from stress-related issues, and the retention of valued employees among other benefits.

HP urges companies to use the tips above to beat Info-Mania and encourage a more productive workplace.

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