

# The Remote Work Tech Effect

Workplace technology in a pandemic  
October 2020



# Executive Summary

According to [Slack](#)'s new study, *The Remote Work Tech Effect*, 53% of Australian knowledge workers reported increased productivity since moving to remote work this year, while 77% found it easy to adapt. Further, 82% of respondents felt empowered by the technology they use when working remotely, a significant increase from 68% prior to the pandemic.\*

With 9 in 10 respondents confirming they had moved to remote work this year, the experience of this shift seems to have been positive for many. This aligns with the findings of other recent research, including the [Remote Employee Experience Index](#), conducted by Slack's [Future Forum](#), which found knowledge workers were generally more satisfied with working remotely than they were with office-based work. In fact, when it came to overall satisfaction with remote work, Australian respondents ranked higher than those in any other country - a finding that was also backed up by a recent [Atlassian report](#).

The widespread shift to remote work brought about by the pandemic has undoubtedly altered our lives in almost every way throughout the course of 2020. And perhaps no change has been as stark as the rapid adoption of new technologies and the sprint towards new ways of working, which saw the roadmap for digital transformation for many organisations shrink from years to weeks, even days.

Again, this has been seen overwhelmingly as a positive change among those surveyed:

- 66% of knowledge workers said they believed the rapid adoption of tech had positively impacted their organisations and their industries;
- 34% felt they were making more effective use of technology for work; and,
- 29% believed they had become more tech savvy in their work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Benchmarking the results of this study with a similar survey we conducted in January 2020\*, before the pandemic hit, we saw an uptick in positive responses to the benefits associated with workplace technology, including:

- 84% believed technology made it easier to communicate with both internal *and* external teams (up from 75% and 77% respectively);
- 86% believed technology had made it easier for them to communicate with colleagues working in other geographic locations (up from 79%); and,
- 83% believed technology enabled better collaboration (up from 74%).

Roughly two-thirds of knowledge workers felt their organisation had made sufficient investment in software to aid communication and collaboration, and that they were making better use of software in response to the pandemic (66% and 65% respectively). Further, 62% said they could not do their job without collaboration software.

Perhaps as a flow-on effect, 56% of the knowledge workers surveyed considered their organisation to be more open and transparent with information, while over half felt better connected to their team and their organisation. Embracing this new, more open approach to communication and collaboration also seems to have had a positive impact on how respondents are feeling about their relationship to their leaders. Half of respondents felt they had better access to senior leadership and their manager, while 53% felt there was greater visibility of the leadership team's focus.

Of course, no change of this scale and speed comes without its challenges, and there were two key tech pain points felt by respondents to the survey.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **The productivity strain of app proliferation**

According to the survey, 45% of respondents said they were using more workplace apps than they did 6 months ago. Now, more than ever, we are relying on a growing suite of specialist cloud-based platforms, tools and apps, throughout our work day — from collaboration platforms to video conferencing tools. But, the fragmentation of work caused by app proliferation was identified by respondents as a key pain point.

The average knowledge worker is using 4 workplace apps per day; a majority (69%) are using between 3 to 10 apps daily; and, 17% are juggling more than 10. With that in mind, 55% of respondents were frustrated that switching between apps was eating up time in their workday. 27% felt they wasted time logging in and out of various apps, and 22% felt they had a loss of productivity due to switching between apps.

Asked to quantify this time, the knowledge workers surveyed estimated that on average they spent 22 minutes per day switching between apps - that's almost 2 hours a week, and 95 hours (or 12 working days) a year.

#### The need for a single, unified, integrated platform

As business apps proliferate, silos of data, knowledge and process are formed, fragmenting where the work happens and information is kept. In today's rapidly changing workplace, it's imperative that the favoured apps we use integrate into our workflows.

Only 1 in 5 respondents felt their workplace apps were sufficiently integrated to allow them to work effectively across them. Tellingly, a fully integrated single platform, fostering access to multiple apps would appeal to 75% of workers. Better integration, through a collaboration platform like Slack, means knowledge workers are able to take advantage of best-of-breed software and apps, while avoiding the drain on productivity that can emerge when switching between them.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **The frustration of inaccessible information**

With a distributed workforce, and organisations heavily reliant on technology to replace the in-person interactions common in an office environment, open and simple access to information has never been more important.

According to the survey, over half of respondents said they consider not being able to find the information or documents they need as one of their biggest workday frustrations. A significant majority (68%) of respondents said they could do their job better if they had better access to information, and over half felt they could do their boss's job if they had access to the same information as they do.

Delving a little deeper, 59% of respondents said they struggled with information and documents being stored in too many and varied places across their organisation. Half felt that documents were not saved where they should be, making it hard to find important information.

#### The power of a single source of truth

There has been a significant shift, accelerated by the pandemic, towards open communication and collaboration, which has resulted in more informed and engaged people, greater alignment across teams, and more agile organisations. Giving people the information they need to do their jobs and creating an open workplace that promotes knowledge sharing and enables faster decision-making, has been critical for organisations navigating successfully through the pandemic.

In the era of email, one-to-one messages and closed threads, initiated and prioritised by the sender, were a good way to keep tight control of information and to insulate the workforce from decision-making. While email will continue to support some kinds of communication, it's no longer the right tool for today's faster, cross-functional collaboration.

Channel-based messaging, like in Slack, is rapidly replacing email in organisations that want an open, inclusive culture. Once all communication is moved into channels, everyone knows where to go to ask their question, give their update and get caught up. The impact of this is transformative.

# The Remote Work Tech Effect

Research Overview



# The remote workplace

A positive shift to remote work

App proliferation is at an all time high

Access to information has never been more important



A POSITIVE SHIFT

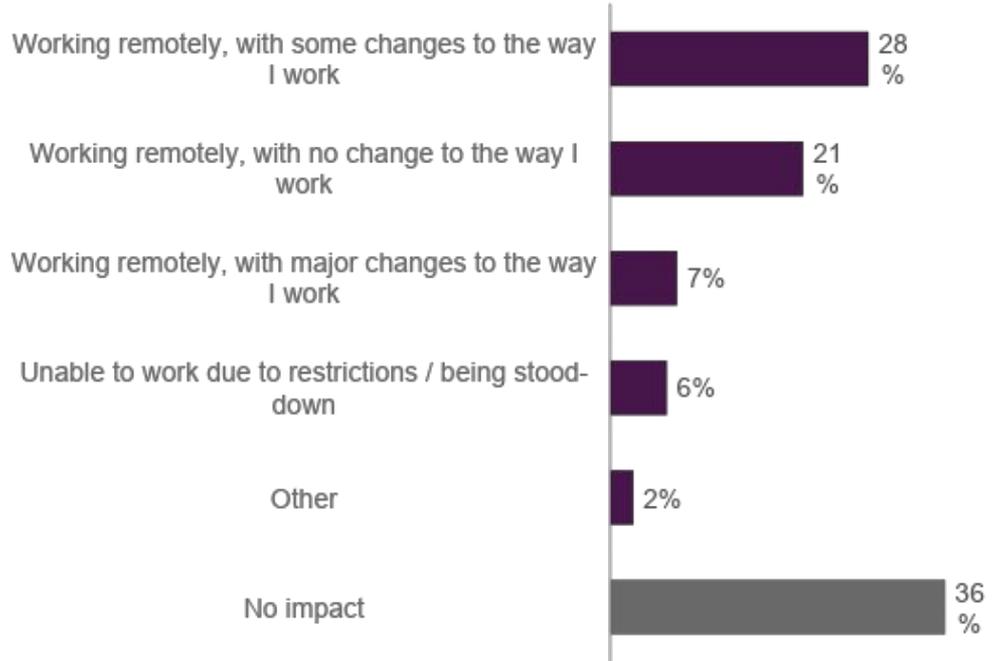
# **2 in 3 (64%) Australians working in enterprise organisations had their work life impacted by COVID-19**

Of those impacted, 9 in 10 (87%) working remotely

A POSITIVE SHIFT

# Impact of COVID-19

2 in 3 enterprise workers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the majority able to work remotely





**77%**

Of remote workers found it easy to adapt to working remotely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic



**53%**

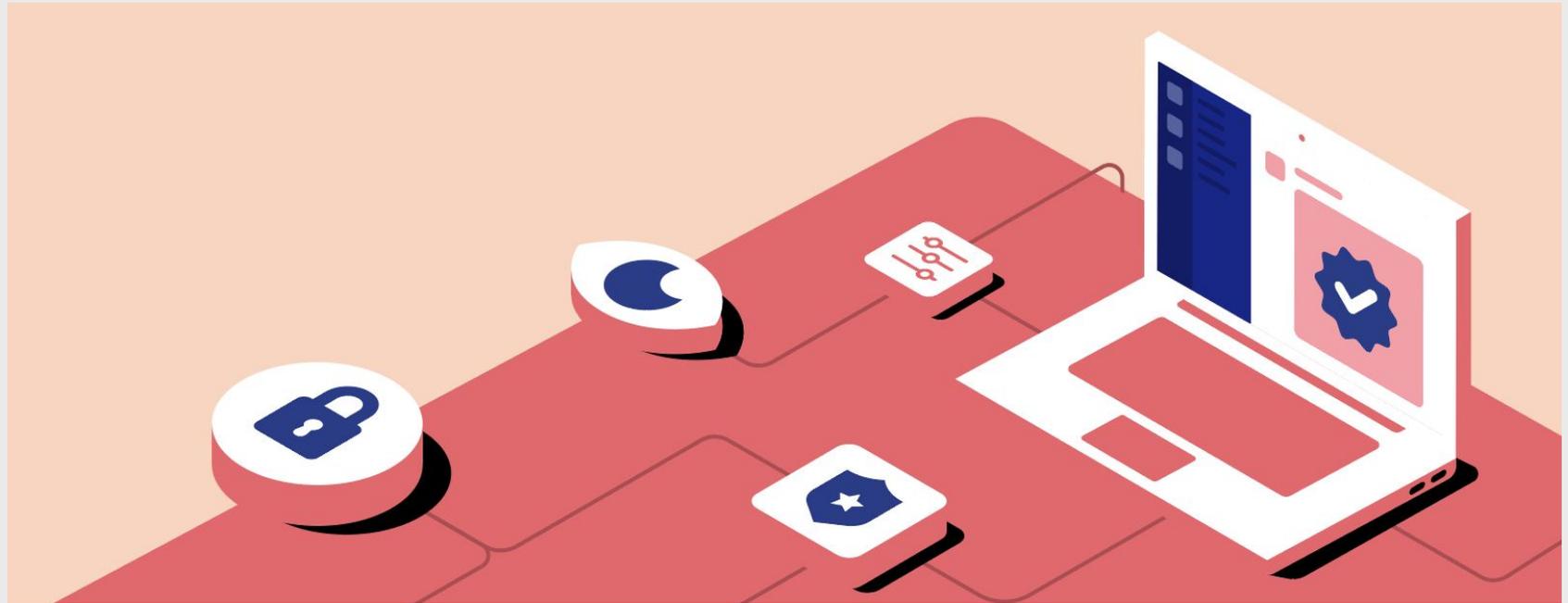
Of remote workers had increased productivity compared to before the pandemic commenced

A POSITIVE SHIFT

**Most remote workers found the transition to be a positive experience**

A POSITIVE SHIFT

**The impact of the pandemic has highlighted the reliance on technology required to keep colleagues connected and make remote working a success**



A POSITIVE SHIFT

# Technology benefits

The pandemic has highlighted the benefits of workplace technology, particularly in facilitating communication



Significantly higher / lower at 95% confidence ↑↓

A POSITIVE SHIFT

**82%**

**Of Australian enterprise workers feel empowered by the technology they use in the workplace, a significant increase from 68% prior to the pandemic**





**62%**

Of enterprise workers say they couldn't do their job without collaboration software or apps



**34%**

Are making more effective use of technology for work



**29%**

Have become more tech savvy at work due to the pandemic

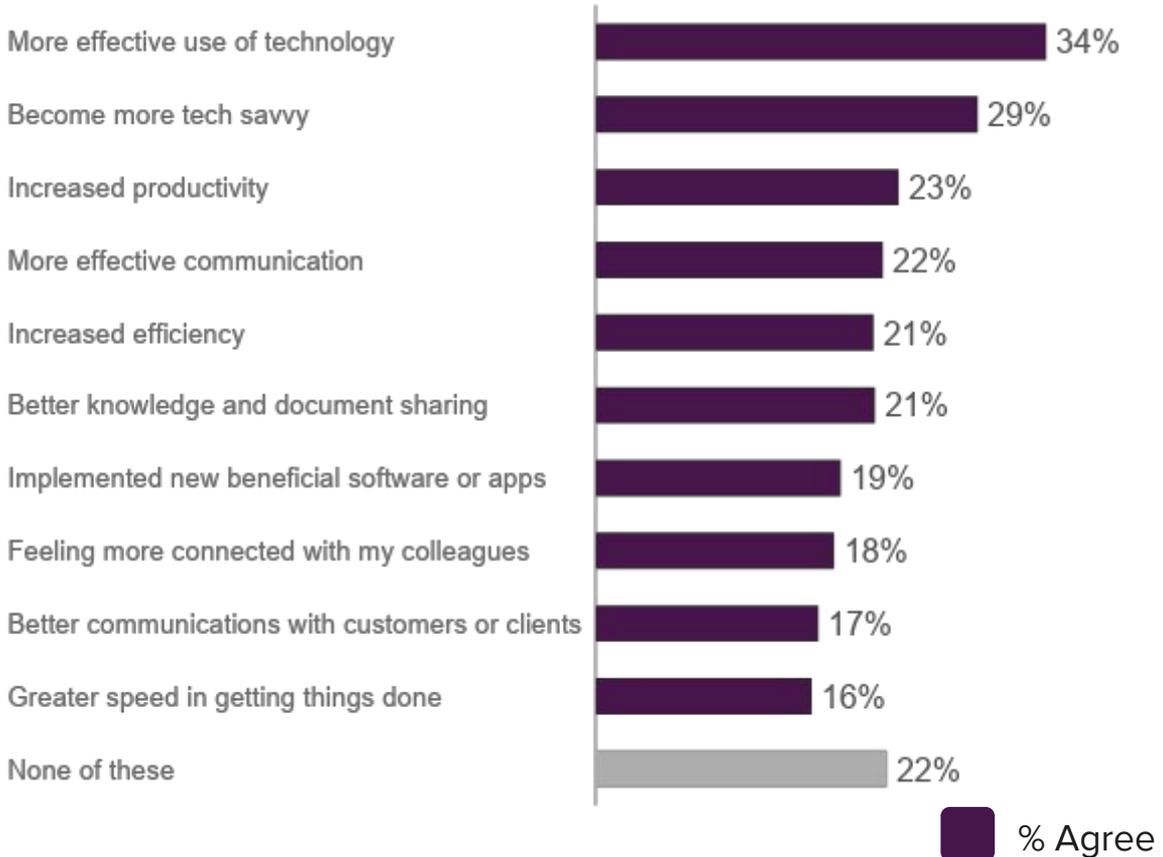
A POSITIVE SHIFT

**The pandemic  
was a catalyst  
for many,  
driving further  
engagement with  
technology**

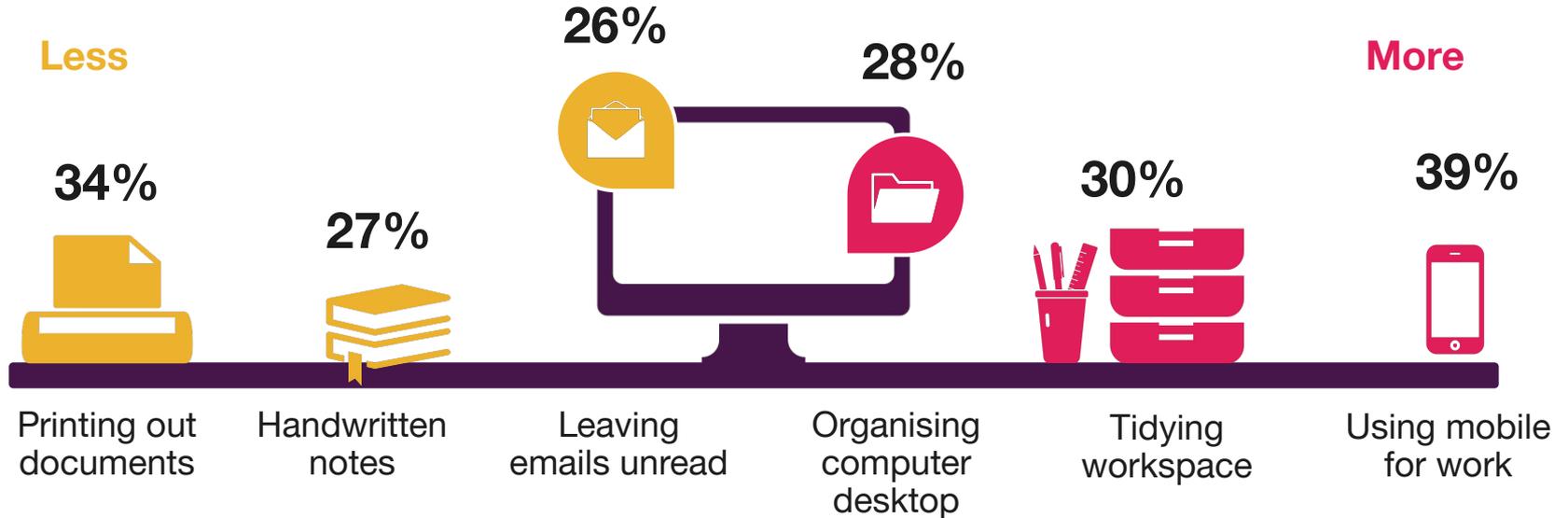
A POSITIVE SHIFT

# Tech impact

As a result of technological advances driven by the pandemic, 3 in 10 are making more effective use of technology and feel more tech savvy



# Habits related to analogue ways of working have shifted





# Rapid adoption of tech has positively impacted most organisations (66%) and most industries (66%)

And 65% of enterprise workers feel that their organisation is making better use of software in response to the pandemic

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# The pandemic has resulted in better communication within organisations



**56%**

Consider their organisation to be more open and transparent with information



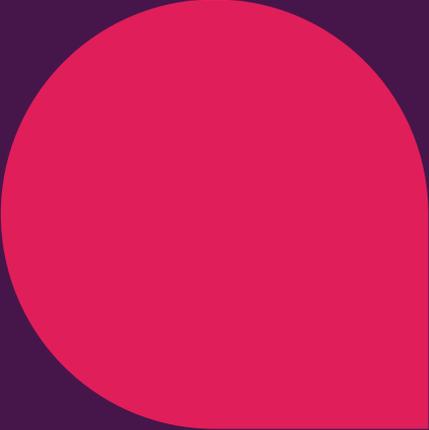
**54%**

Feel better connected to their team / organisation



**43%**

Feel there is less internal hierarchy at work



A POSITIVE SHIFT

**Many enterprise workers feel that they now have greater ability to contact senior leadership (50%) and their manager (50%)**

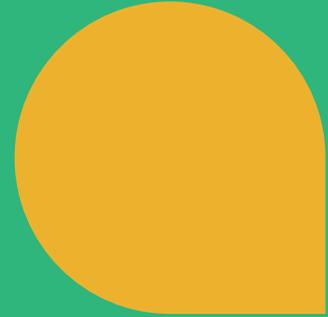
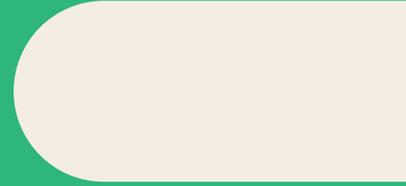
 28

 13

53%

As a result, there is **greater visibility / transparency of leadership team focus** in the workplace

**App proliferation is  
at an all time high**



## APP PROLIFERATION

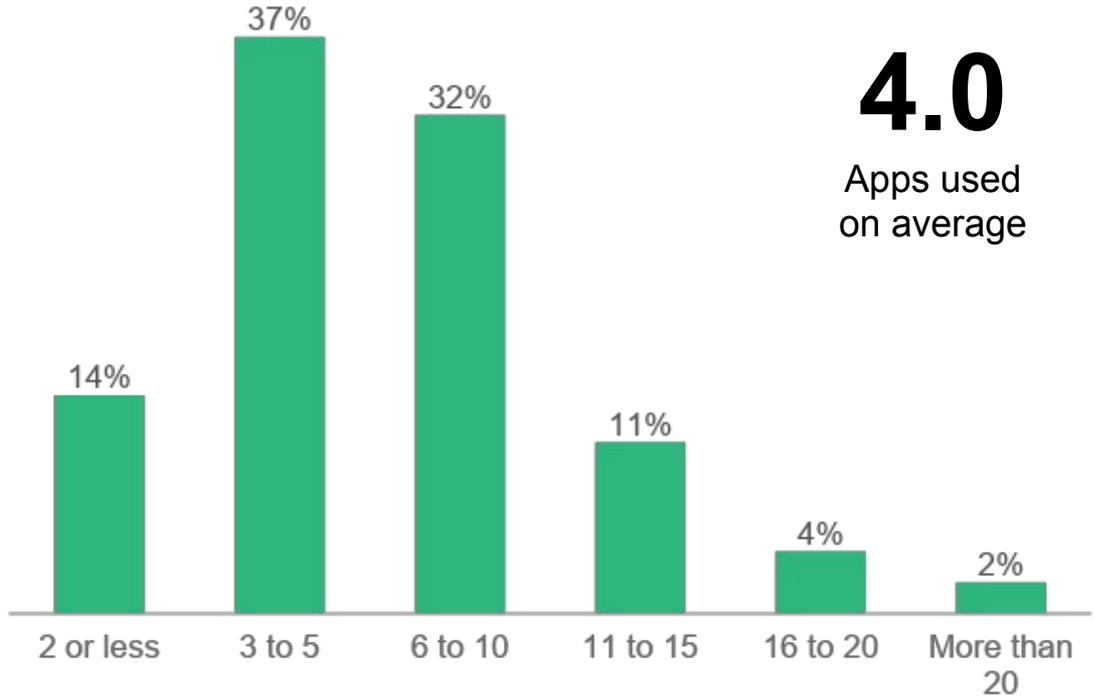
# 45%

Of enterprise workers are using more apps at work than 6 months ago



# Number of apps used

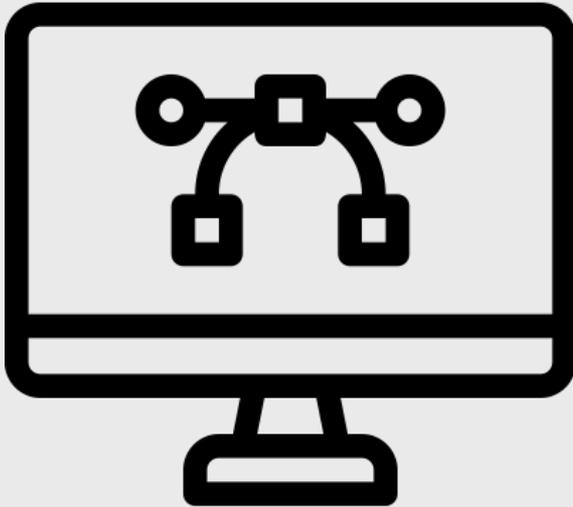
Multiple apps have become part of the working day, with the average enterprise worker using on average **4 different apps daily**



**4.0**

Apps used  
on average

## APP PROLIFERATION



The pandemic has increased workplace **app usage**:

**20%**

Are using 1 additional app for work

**17%**

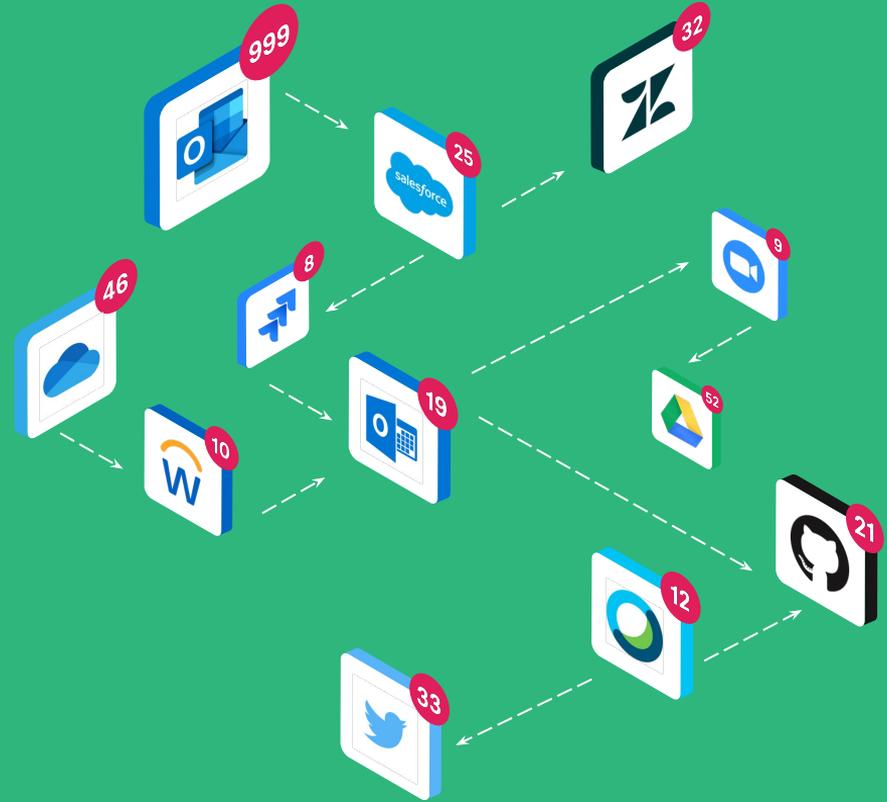
Are using 2 additional apps for work

**8%**

Are using 3 or more additional apps for work

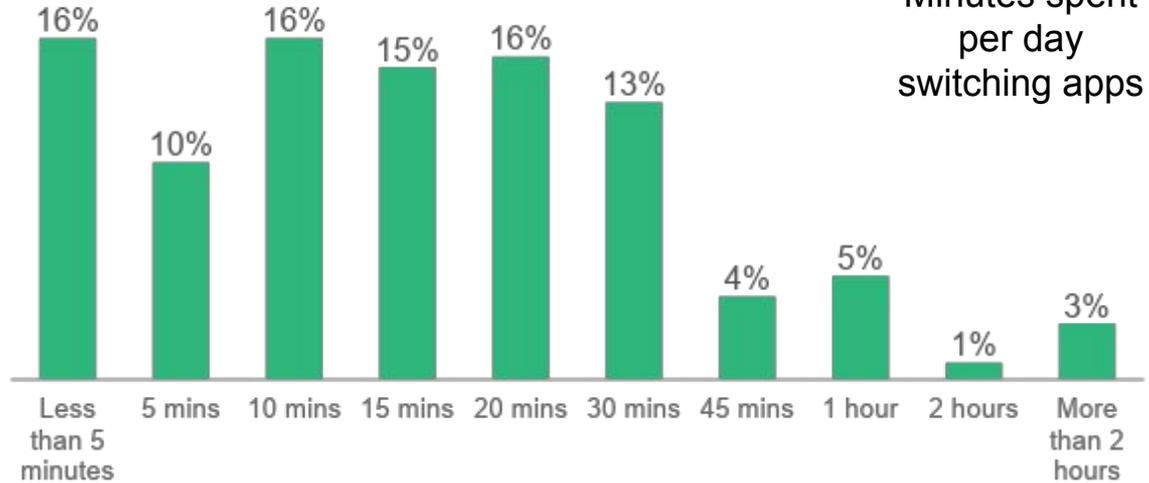
## APP PROLIFERATION

**1 in 2 (55%) feel that switching between numerous apps eats up time in their workday**



# Time spent switching apps daily

Whereas multiple apps used daily are deemed essential, **time is being lost** through switching between apps throughout the workday

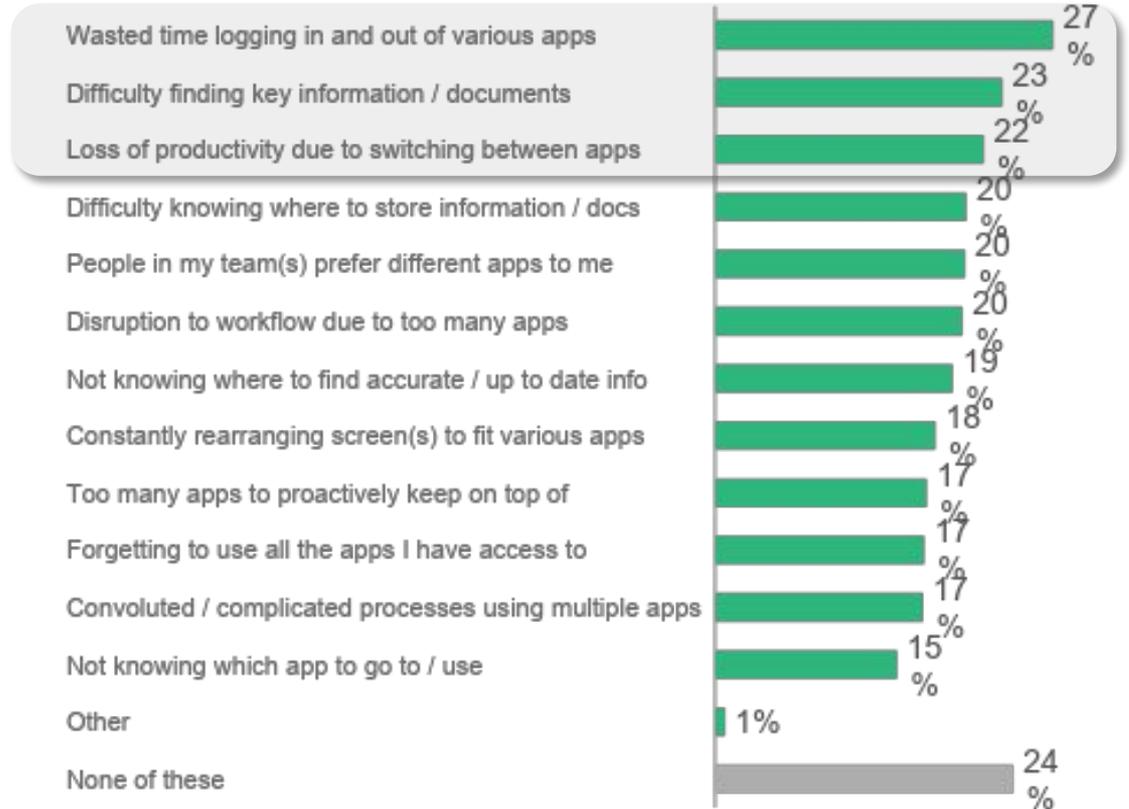


22

Minutes spent per day switching apps

# App proliferation pain points

Among other challenges, app proliferation is resulting in wasted time **logging in and out of apps**, difficulty locating key information and loss of productivity





**69%**

Feel work would be easier if all software and apps were integrated into a single platform



**62%**

Wish they could access multiple apps within a single platform

## APP PROLIFERATION

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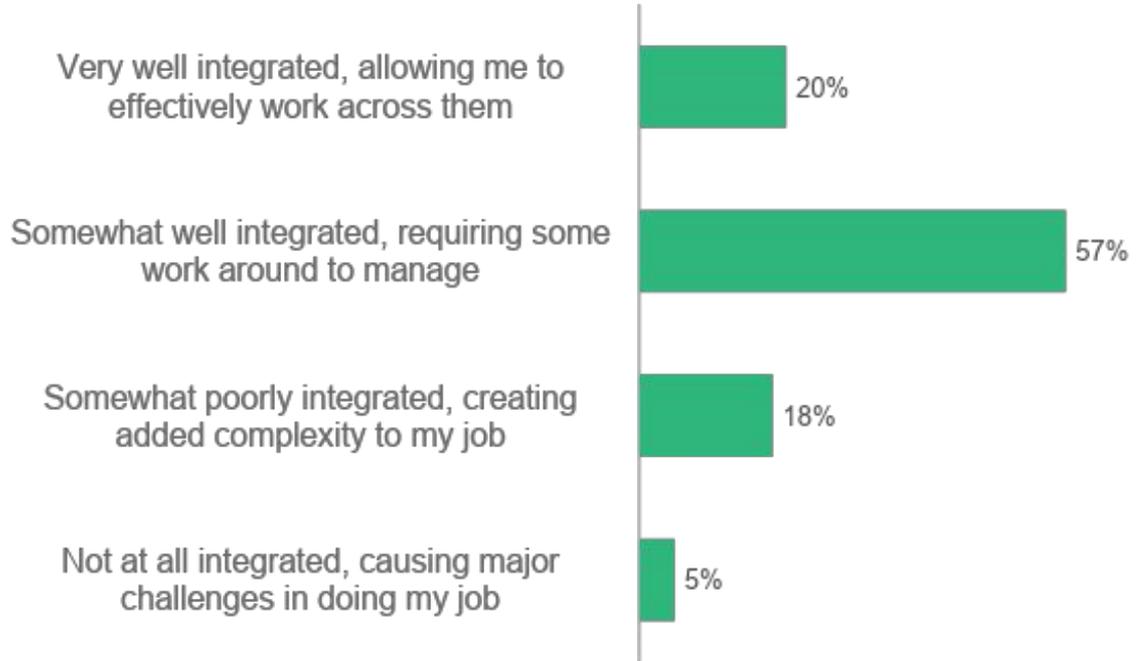
**The need for a single, integrated platform**

**Integration between apps is an issue for most workers. Only 1 in 5 (20%) feel the apps they use are sufficiently integrated to allow them to work effectively across them.**

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## Integration of applications

4 in 5 feel that integration between the apps they use for work **could be better**, to enable them to work effectively across them



**A fully integrated single platform,  
containing access to multiple apps  
would appeal to 3 in 4 (75%)  
enterprise workers**

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**Access to information  
has never been more  
important**





59%

Struggle with information and documents being stored in too many places across the organisation



50%

Feel that documents are often not saved where they should be, making it hard to find important information

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**The issue:  
Organisations  
lack a single  
source of 'truth'**

# **2 in 3 (68%) Australians working in enterprise organisations believe they could do their job better if information was more readily available**

And 1 in 2 (52%) feel they could do their bosses job if they had access to the same information!

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# Poor knowledge sharing severely impacts both businesses and employees



**53%**

Consider not finding the information or documents they need as one of the biggest workday frustrations



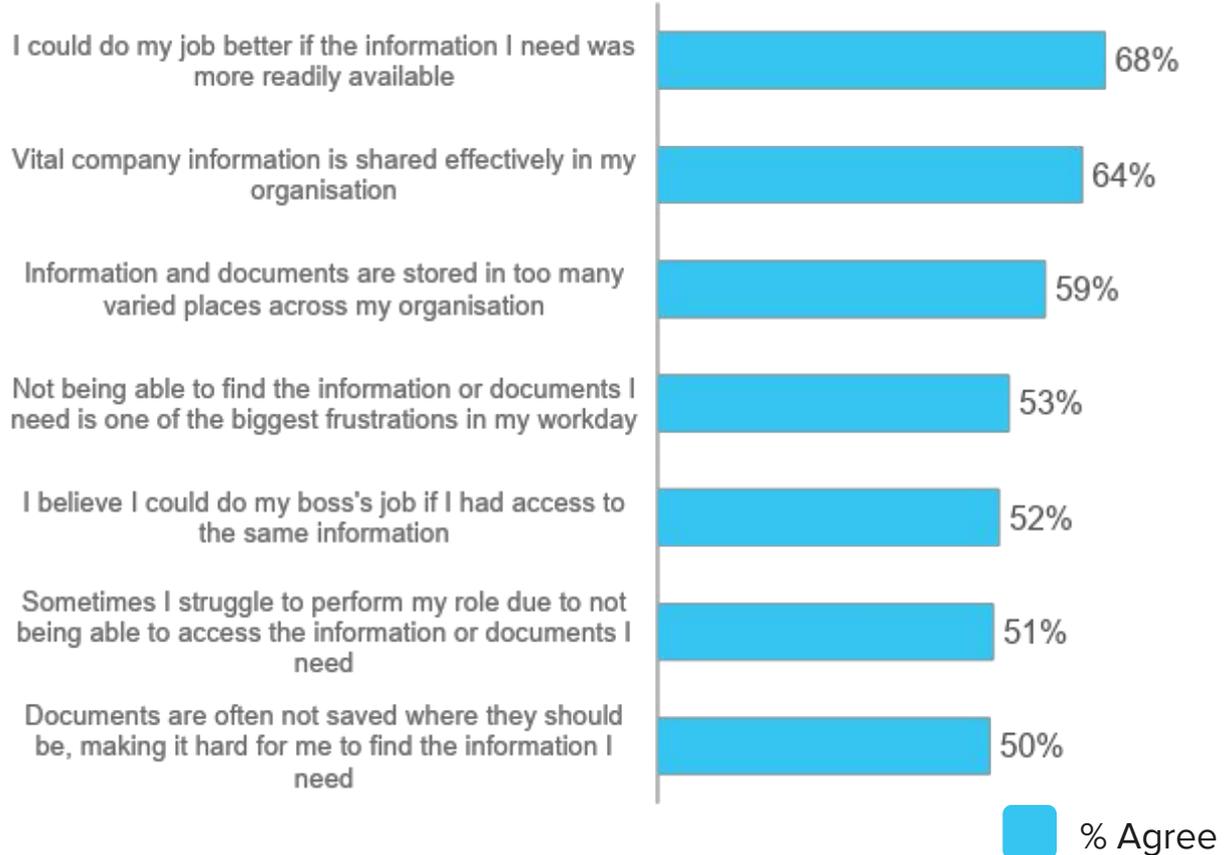
**51%**

Struggle to perform their role due to not being able to access necessary information or documents

# Information sharing

Most Australians make the link between effective knowledge sharing and **heightened job performance**

Frustrations such as documents being stored in too many places or not being able to find key documents exist for 1 in 2 Australians



# Thank you

Research conducted for Slack by Honeycomb Strategy in October 2020



# Research Methodology

## Research methodology

*The Remote Work Tech Effect* study was conducted by [Honeycomb Strategy](#) on behalf of Slack in October 2020. The survey included responses from 1,000 Australian knowledge workers within organisations of 100+ employees.

\*Some of the results of *The Remote Work Tech Effect* study have been benchmarked against research Slack and Honeycomb Strategy conducted into working habits, and the way teams work together, among a similar survey base of 1,000 Australian knowledge workers in January 2020, prior to the pandemic.

## Resources

Full report: *The Remote Work Tech Effect*

Slack guide: [Navigating the disruption of work](#)