TEMPLATE

Getting the most out of GCworkplace



*About this tool*

**PURPOSE:** To help employees be as effective as possible in a GCworkplace environment

**AUDIENCE:** Employees of all levels who are transitioning to a modern workplace and who are looking for tips to be effective workers in their new surroundings

**USE:**

* in presentations to employees
* in emails
* on internal websites
* in blog posts

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GCworkplace is challenging what it’s like to work in government. To meet the demands of modern Canada, we’re doing things differently; like retooling work environments to encourage collaboration, using technology in smarter ways, and fostering a culture of flexibility and well-being. It’s time to work how and where it makes sense. Together, we will transform the experience of working for the Government of Canada (GC).

# The GCworkplace vision

The workplace allows open, flexible and collaborative work. For example, you can arrange to work alongside those with whom you are currently involved in a project, even if they are not in your unit.

The back office enables modern business processes. From here, it’s up to us all to figure out the best way of doing things to save time and duplication of work.



The way we work is collaborative, mobile and connected because we all know how to use and are comfortable using the tools available to us. “*Digital technologies only enable possible actions […]; they do not make those actions happen.*”[[1]](#endnote-1)

# Activity-based working

GCworkplace is based on the concept of activity-based working, which encourages employees to untether from a fixed point and choose the optimal setting for their work activities throughout the day. For most, the work day is comprised of a number of different activities which have different functional needs and can be best supported by a range of design solutions.

Working collaboratively is working together to get the bigger picture, to eliminate duplication of effort and to save everyone time. In addition to seeing the benefits of a collaborative approach, you will also need the know how to work comfortably in what is a shared digital workspace. Currently, you may already have and use digital tools, but are you using them effectively?

Here, we provide suggestions to help you adapt to this new way of working.

## First, let’s get portable

Without a fixed desk to call home, you will need a strategy to make it easy to pick up your laptop or tablet and use it in a variety of locations. It has been shown that employees who can work in multiple locations experience greater work satisfaction and are more productive in a modern GCworkplace environment.[[2]](#endnote-2)

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| **Scenario 1:** You are working at an individual workstation on a financial summary saved on GCdocs and you are due at a meeting in five minutes. You need to present the document at the meeting so you save your work but leave it open, then unplug your computer (leaving it on) and take it to the meeting room. You open it, connect to Wi-Fi and attach the projector cable. You make changes to the Excel that you and the attendees agree to as your review proceeds. You save the edits. |

Here are the things you should be able to do *comfortably, without much effort*, on a daily basis:

1. Arrange, attach and detach your cables from monitors, mouse and keyboard, or docking station as applicable.
2. Some tips:
   1. Request a wireless mouse and label it with your name
   2. Familiarize yourself with your laptop keyboard; for example, periodically set the workpoint up to use your laptop keyboard as your working keyboard
   3. Arrange your work area so it is easy to detach and reattach the cables from and to your laptop
3. Configure your screen settings for use with multiple screens, following the guidance provided by your IT department
4. [Connect to Wi-Fi](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/SSC:IT_Service_Portal/How-To.../Wi-Fi_(Windows_7_Only)/Wireless_Tips_and_Tricks)
5. [Use a smartphone](https://gcdocs.gc.ca/tpsgc-pwgsc/llisapi.dll/open/38980104)

## Second, let’s get virtual

Another important element of the modern workplace is connecting with others through virtual media.

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| **Scenario 2:** In the last scenario, you and your colleagues collaborated during a meeting to update a financial summary saved in GCdocs. Now, after the meeting, you return to your workstation, reconnect your cables, tidy up your edits, send people the link and ask them to make any changes or add further comments directly to the file. Shortly thereafter, your manager phones you saying she just chatted with one of the attendees at the meeting and would like to look at the numbers you presented. She is teleworking today and sends you a WebEx invitation. While you remain on the phone with her, you receive the invitation and the WebEx application loads and you have joined the meeting, she makes you the presenter. You share your Excel application with her through WebEx and together you review the file. |

In order to work effectively in a virtual environment, you will need to know how to:

[Insert links to your internal procedures on the following]

1. work collaboratively using GCdocs
2. use WebEx
3. use Instant Messenger (IM) or Jabber
4. use a smartphone
5. use and understand the value of GCTools (GCconnex, GCpedia and GCintranet)

## Third, let’s get digital

Many of us are only using partial functionalities of our basic software. A little learning can go a long way to making your work easier and less stressful. Outlook and MS Office contain time-saving features that are not commonly known. No tool is perfect, but by becoming proficient in the applications you use for your duties, you will save time and rely less on paper or paper-based models.

[Insert links to your internal procedures on the following]

1. Work from a screen rather than a printout
2. Master GCdocs
3. Be aware of (explore, experiment) and master the time-saving functionalities of basic office software
   1. OneNote: use tags, create notebooks, sections, section groups and pages, share notebooks, Outlook integration
   2. Excel: Format as table, data filters, data sorting, flash fill, conditional formatting, data validation, basic formulas (sum, subtotal), etc.
   3. Word: Heading formatting, tables, tables of contents, SmartArt, QuickParts, mail merge, etc.
   4. PowerPoint: Formatting, views, and special features such as screen and audio recording (for demos), etc.
   5. Outlook: [GCdocs integration](https://gcdocs.gc.ca/tpsgc-pwgsc/llisapi.dll/4658216/NCA-GCDOCS-RPB-QRC_11-OUTLOOK.doc?func=Edit.Edit&reqp=0&nodeid=4658216&ReadOnly=True&VerNum=-2&viewType=1), scheduling assistant, shared calendars, etc.
   6. PDF Editor: Document conversion, annotation, forms, digital signatures, etc.
4. Be aware of and master the professional software specific to your work
5. Use digital signatures (in accordance to your Information Management policies)

Getting up to speed on technology can only save time and minimize stress doing your job in a shared digital workspace.

Consider the following scenarios:

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| **Scenario 3a:** You continue your WebEx meeting with your manager who would like to review and discuss some of the information with you. She’s only interested in items over a certain amount, so you apply the number filter at the top of the column to show only those records. She is satisfied that the numbers are reasonable and would like you to share the document with colleagues who have further information to include. After signing off, you clear the filter and save the document. You look at GCdocs permissions and ensure that your colleagues have permission to reserve and make edits to the document. You send them a link in an email with a note and cc your manager.  **Scenario 3b:** The director of a branch would like to see her direct reports’ schedules to get an overview of when they will be away. She opens her team’s individual calendars in Outlook, uses month view and overlay arrangement to get a snapshot of when most are *Out Of Office*. |
| **Scenario 3c:** Your colleague needs to review a set of drawings provided by a consultant to ensure they meet the federal standards and codes. He reserves a closed room with a large work surface or table and oversized monitor or tv, gathers his laptop and roll of drawings and heads off to do his work. He rolls out the drawings and configures the screen for the optimum view as these are large, complex files. He reviews the printout for context and annotates and signs the documents online using the functionalities of his PDF software. He has been doing this for a while and has become accustomed to working on screen. Being fully proficient and able to switch among views, he is rewarded by flexibility and the time saved. He then resubmits the document with his comments to the consultant via a sharing site set up for that purpose. The contractor is automatically notified. |
| **Scenario 3d:** A client service representative would like to obtain feedback from a variety of clients about a series of draft proposals about client services. She creates a closed group in GCconnex, setting the *Group membership permissions* to *Closed* and *Who can see this group?* to *Group members only*. She then invites the clients to join, posts the proposals and asks clients to post comments. She receives notifications when members post comments, which go directly to an Outlook folder she created and to which she assigned a rule. She continues to use this medium to share files with clients and receive feedback as she finds it useful that everyone can exchange views and share information with each other in one place. |
| **Scenario 3e:** You are in an acting position. You, the managers for your substantive and acting positions, and your colleague in HR will need to sign an extension form. You receive a link to a pdf with the managers’ electronic signatures and electronically sign the document and save it. You let HR know that it has been signed. |
| **Scenario 3f:** You have been asked to develop a checklist and a lessons learned document for your team related to a government-wide process. Before drawing it up, you use the search function on GCdocs and also consult your networks in GCconnex. It turns out someone in the Pacific Region has just prepared such a document, now in draft. They have n  ot included ideas that you had planned to include and vice versa. You chat and realize you can share and combine your knowledge and experience, producing a collaborative document that is very thorough. |

Switching from the paper-based model to the digital model

In addition to being able to get the most from the tools now available to you, it’s also important to *plan your work with an awareness of the options*. The following diagrams compare working using a paper-based model and a digital model for four common workplace tasks.

#### Create a document

#### Collect input

#### Record meeting notes

Of course, it could take a lifetime to learn every feature of every application that we use. But none of us has the luxury to continue to say “I’m not tech-savy.” Digital technology is here to stay. The most important thing is that we are planning and managing our work to take the most advantage of our shared digital environment, doing things that make it easy for us to work collaboratively, portably and virtually.

## Fourth, let’s work collaboratively:

When working with others, you might exchange ideas and information that would otherwise get missed. You and your colleagues possess knowledge related to your field of expertise, which includes your know-how and experience that is not readily summarized and accessible to others. If you use the opportunity to move around and touch base with people that you wouldn’t ordinarily have met in an assigned seating environment, you will find that you can broaden your perspective and pick up information that can aid you in your work or understanding of your organization.

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| **Scenario 4a:** You return from a meeting and find two colleagues who are working near you today discussing a new initiative. You have just learned the details at the meeting and so you join them in the discussion, which helps each of you better understand implications for your work. |

How to get the most out of working collaboratively

Understanding the different needs and preferences of your colleagues can help you adjust to working in closer proximity to them and get the most out of your interactions.

Some people need to think aloud to clarify their thoughts. They may or may not be looking for feedback. Some may find background chatter helps them concentrate. Some people need quiet to think. They don’t always feel the need to share their ideas nor always want to speak up. Some are good listeners, but they *don’t always want to be listening*, just as others are good talkers, but don’t always want to be *the ones talking*.

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| **Scenario 4b**: A colleague who generally sets up at an open individual workstation has to review a complex set of policies in preparation for a meeting scheduled for the afternoon. This morning, she books a focus room to be able to concentrate. She has her laptop with her so she can take notes one OneNote and share notes them through GCdocs. |

In the normal course of everyday work, there are moments of conversation and moments of quiet. Plan your work so that when you require quiet to review long, complex policies or contracts, or write reports or summaries, you can do so uninterrupted. For example, use the option to telework or reserve a workpoint that has a sound barrier. Also, it’s important to develop trust and be comfortable with sharing information and to adopt an open approach—you never know what information might be useful to you. Be open to new ideas and be willing to share yours, even in draft.

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| **Scenario 4c:** Project leads from different branches were asked to summarize information to be reported on a monthly basis. A few of them decided they wanted to find out how others were approaching the task. Learning from each other, they looked at the sources of information used to populate the report and discovered ways of transferring information rather than copying it. By working together they recognized that the information could also be reused in local reports without having to re-enter it, which meant the information would be consistent in all reports. By developing a solid strategy for collaborative information gathering and sharing, they reduced the number of times they were called on to provide information. |
| **Scenario 4d:** You need to plan a task around a specific policy that impacts your work. You’d heard vaguely that something was about to change and wanted to get clarification. You posted your question on GCconnex and later that morning, a senior policy analyst working on the policy posted an answer. The analyst’s answer prompted another person to ask a question and then others to chime in as well. Over the next day or so you checked the discussion thread and exchanged with colleagues across the country. The discussion gave you an in-depth understanding of the policy. |

## Fifth, tips for adapting to a modern GCworkplace

To get the most from a modern GCworkplace environment, be ready to

1. Pick up and go—be mobile!
2. Learn what your software can do
3. Learn how to use the tools available to you (Wi-Fi, WebEx, GCdocs, etc.)
4. Plan your work using digital technology rather than using a paper-based approach
5. Connect with people virtually and in person
6. Share ideas, even as you are working them out

As you transition to a modern GCworkplace, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. If you are a manager, director or trusted colleague, you are setting an example. Being negative towards the change can discourage colleagues and employees from modernizing.
2. Don’t revert to old processes with the excuse that you don’t have time to learn.

# Appendix

Groups on GCconnex

[GCworkplace](https://gcconnex.gc.ca/groups/profile/177195/enworkplace-20-milieu-de-travail-20frmilieu-de-travail-20-workplace-20)

[Workplace Change Management](https://gcconnex.gc.ca/groups/profile/28332343/engcworkplace-change-manager-community-sharespacefrespace-partage-de-la-communautu00e9-de-gestionnaires-du-changement-pour-le-milieudetravailgc)

1. Kane, Gerald C., “Unexpected Benefits of Digital Transformation”, Blog, MITSloan Management Review (Jan. 4, 2017) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The rise and rise of ABW - Reshaping the physical, virtual and behavioural workspace - Leesman Study (May 2016).pdf  
   (<https://gcdocs.gc.ca/tpsgc-pwgsc/llisapi.dll?func=ll&objaction=overview&objid=41722550>) [↑](#endnote-ref-2)