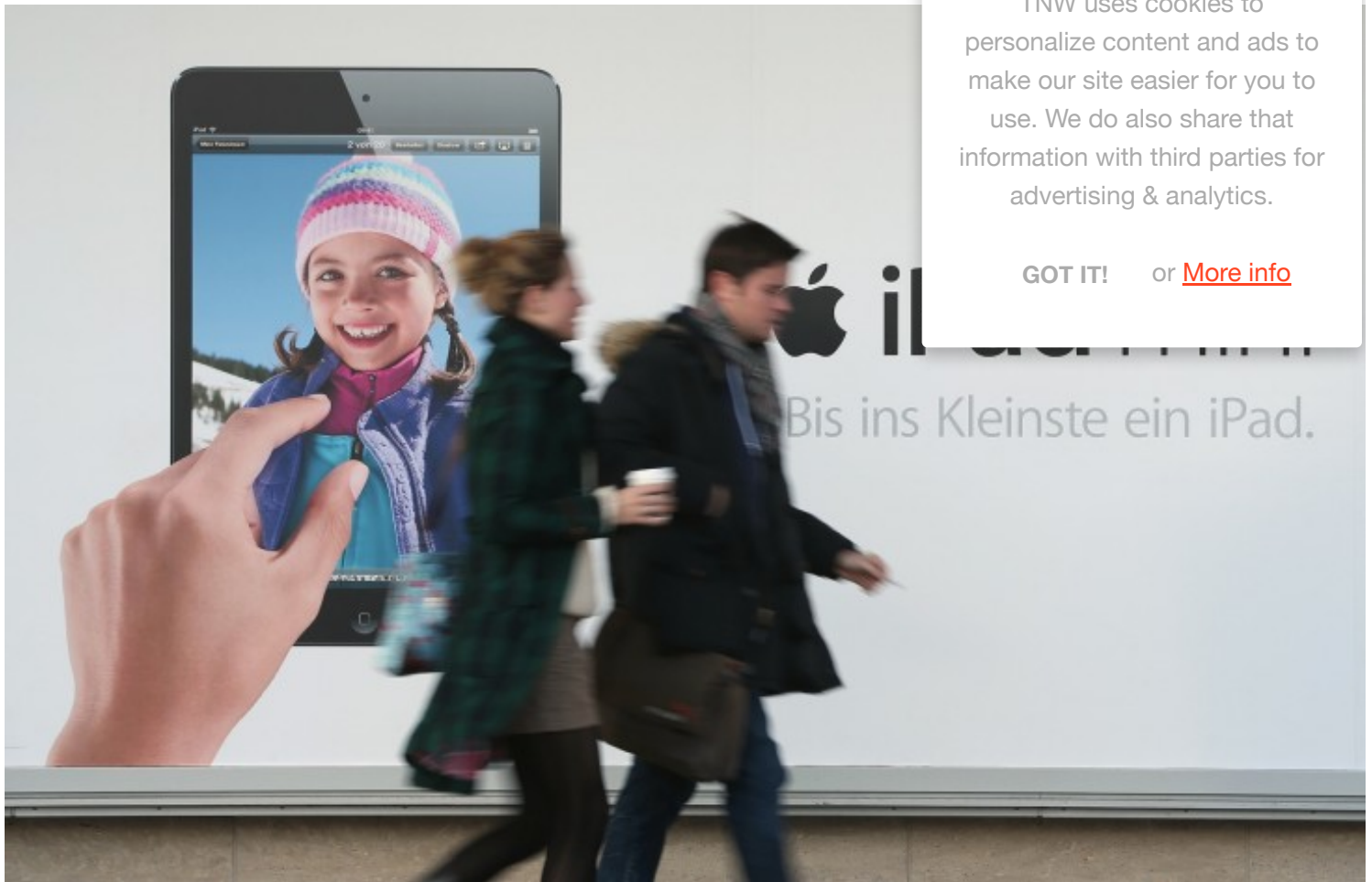


## Apple fires up its version of Google's '20% time', giving some employees 2 weeks for special projects

by MATTHEW PANZARINO — Nov 12, 2012 in APPLE



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Apple is trying out its own version of Google's 20% time, reports Jessica Lessin on [The Wall Street Journal's News Hub](#), as singled out by [Jay Yarow at Business Insider](#). The initiative, called Blue Sky, gives some employees 2 weeks out of their normal work schedule to work on special projects.

Google has long offered a version of this called '20% time' which allows workers to devote 20% of their work time to their own projects or hacks. Many of those have turned into full-on products like [YouTube](#) for Good.

under CEO Tim Cook.

Blue Sky was apparently set up earlier this year and gives a small group of employees 2 weeks or 'a limited amount of time' to work on a project outside of their normal responsibilities at Apple.

There are several companies in silicon valley that offer this kind of flexibility in their working hours, but it would be a first for Apple. The company is famous for utilizing small groups that work within the organization at large. The [Google Maps](#) app, for instance, was built by just two engineers. This kind of 'startup within a company' is often utilized for new projects like the [iPhone](#) or [iPad](#), and kept completely cordoned off from the rest of the operation.

Though this is being presented as a way that Apple is becoming 'like other companies', I think it's a great fit regardless. It has always been prone to small groups of employees creating good things. This allows them to, perhaps, contribute their efforts to other small groups for projects about which they may have a passion. It will be interesting to see if we can ever attribute a shipping Apple product to one of these jam sessions.

Image Credit: [Sean Gallup](#)/Getty Images

GOOGLE

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# Chinese factories deploy AI to grow more than 6 billion roaches a year

by **BRYAN CLARK** — 41 minutes ago in **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**



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In what sounds like the stuff nightmares are made of, a Chinese facility is breeding roaches by the billions for use in medicinal concoctions. These “healing potions” are reportedly used to cure respiratory, gastric, and other diseases according to an official report.

As *South China Morning Post* reporter Stephen Chen tells it:

“

*Long, narrowly spaced rows of shelves fill a multi-storey building about the size of two sports fields. The shelves are lined with open containers of food and water.*

*It is warm, humid and dark all year round, with freedom to roam to find food and reproduce. Fully sealed like a prison, it has strict limitations on access to visitors. From birth to death, inhabitants never see the sun.*

This building is one of many. In Sichuan alone, government officials report producing nearly 28,000 full-sized adult cockroaches per square foot, each year, in similar facilities.

modeling future growth.

This is important data for a country where more than 40 million people consume crushed-up roach concoctions due to their perceived health benefits. (In case you're wondering — which you almost certainly are not — it's reported that the roach potions look like tea, have a bit of a fishy smell, and taste slightly sweet.)

But if roach tea has you grossed out, you might want to skip this next part entirely.

According to Professor Zhu Chaodong of the Institute of Zoology at the Chinese Academy of Science, if the roaches were to escape — whether by human error or natural disaster — the results would be “catastrophic.” Just a dozen of them could infest an entire neighborhood, he says.

Worse, some critics are concerned that amplified reproduction and genetic screening could accelerate the natural evolution of the insect, thus producing “super cockroaches” of abnormal size and breeding capability.

“Multiple lines of defence must be in place and work properly to prevent the disaster of accidental release,” Zhu continued.

> **A giant indoor farm in China is breeding 6 billion cockroaches a year. Here's why** on South China Morning Post

TECH

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