

## Three theories for why you have no time

One of the **truisms** of modern life is that nobody has any time. Everybody is busy, burned out, **swamped**, overwhelmed. So let's try a simple thought experiment. Imagine that you came into possession of a magical new set of technologies that could automate or **expedite** every single part of your job.

truism 众所周知; 老生常谈

swamp 沼泽; 淹没

What would you do with the extra time? Maybe you'd pick up a hobby, or have more children, or learn to **luxuriate** in the additional leisure. But what if I told you that you wouldn't do any of those things: You would just work the exact same amount of time as before.

expedite 加快; 迅速的

luxuriate 沉溺; 奢侈

This might seem impossible. But there are three simple reasons for this.

Better technology means higher expectations — and higher expectations create more work.

For most of history, humans **blithely languished** in their own **filth**. Most families' clothes were washed on a semi-annual basis, and body **odor** was inescapable. The **fleet** of housework technologies that **sprang** into the world between the late-19th and mid-20th century created new norms of cleanliness — for our floors, our clothes, ourselves.

blithely 快活地

languish 憔悴; 凋萎

filth 污秽; 肮脏

odor 气味; 名声

fleet 车队; 疾驰

spring 生长; 涌出

New norms meant more work. Automatic washers and dryers raised our expectations for clean clothes and encouraged people to go out and buy new shirts and pants; housewives therefore had more loads of laundry to wash, dry, and fold.

In short, technology made it much easier to clean a house to 1890s standards. But by mid-century, Americans didn't want that old house. They wanted a modern home — with dustless *windowsills* and *glistening* floors — and this dustless glisten required a 40-to-50-hour workweek, even with the assistance of modern tools.

windowsill 窗台

glisten 闪光; 耀眼