

The world's biggest work-from-home experiment has been triggered by coronavirus

In an attempt to limit social contact to slow the spread of the virus, known officially as Covid-19, millions of employees in China and other affected areas are currently working from home.

Tech companies including Tencent, Alibaba and Microsoft have told CNN their staff will work from home for the next one to two weeks, citing health and safety concerns.

Meanwhile, some people face social pressure from employers to go into the office despite government guidance to work from home. Employees in customer service industries or front-of-house roles often don't have the option to work remotely.

Although digitally-based industries may be better suited to work from home, advocates have been pushing for years to make work more flexible, arguing that it can be done with the right infrastructure, to the benefit of both employees and employers.

The movement has been embraced by many parents who say the ability to work from home makes it easier to juggle childcare and a career. Many families who can't afford **nannies** or day care face a difficult decision when they have a baby, with one of the parents — often the woman — having to sacrifice career advancement to care for their child.

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The option to work from home doesn't just empower women — it makes it easier for working fathers to step into that role too, in a step toward gender equality that benefits all parties.