



## How Worker Surveillance Is Backfiring on Employers

### 监控员工会造成负面影响

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404 Words

With the rise in remote work has come a **surge** in workplace monitoring – some 2022 estimates **posit** the number of large firms monitoring workers has doubled since the beginning of the pandemic. Some monitoring programs record **keystrokes** or track computer activity by taking periodic **screenshots**. Other software records calls or meetings, even accessing employees' **webcams**.

**surge** [sɜːrdʒ] *n.* 急剧上升, 激增  
*v.* 涌动; 急剧上升, 激增 | a surge in food costs 食品成本的急剧增加

**posit** ['paːzɪt] *v.* 假设, 认定 | Most religions posit the existence of life after death. 大多数宗教都假定人死后生命仍存在。

**keystroke** ['kiːstroʊk] *n.* (对计算机或其他机器的) 按键, 击键

**screenshot** ['skriːnʃɑːt] *n.* 屏幕截图

**webcam** ['webkæm] *n.* 网络摄像机

**regardless of** 不管, 不顾, 不理睬 | The club welcomes all new members regardless of age. 俱乐部对所有新成员不分年龄一律欢迎。

**embrace** [ɪmˈbreɪs] *v.* 欣然接受, 乐意采纳; 拥抱; 包括, 包含 | We hope these regions will embrace democratic reforms. 我们希望这些地区会乐意接受民主改革。

**surveil** [sɜːrˈveɪl] *v.* 监视, 监督

**backfire** [ˌbækˈfaɪər] *v.* 产生事与愿违的不良后果; (车辆或其发动机) 逆火, 回火 | Unfortunately the plan backfired. 不幸的是, 计划产生了适得其反的结果。

**surveillance** [sɜːrˈveɪləns] *n.* 监

随着远程办公的增加, 职场监控也大幅增加——根据 2022 年的一些估算, 自疫情发生以来, 监控员工的大公司数量翻了一番。一些监控程序通过定期截屏来记录按键或追踪计算机活动。还有一些软件记录电话或会议, 甚至启用员工的网络摄像头。

**Regardless of** how they choose to monitor workers, many firms are **embracing** monitoring because they believe it ensures the productivity of remote employees, says Karen Levy, associate professor in the Department of Information Science at Cornell University.

康奈尔大学信息科学系副教授凯伦·利维表示, 无论公司采取什么样的方式监控员工, 许多公司都愿意这么做, 因为它们相信这能确保员工远程办公的工作效率。

But data from research suggests that **surveilling** employees often **backfires**. David Welsh, a professor at Arizona State University, and a team of fellow researchers posited that being monitored might make employees more likely to break rules. In one study, he and his colleagues found that US employees who were under **surveillance** took more unapproved breaks and **intentionally** worked more slowly than their un-monitored

peers.

但研究数据表明，监视员工往往适得其反。亚利桑那州立大学教授戴维·威尔士和一组研究人员认为，受到监控可能会让员工更有可能违反规定。在一项研究中，他和他的同事发现，与不受监控的同事相比，受到监控的美国员工会未经批准休息更长时间，还会故意工作得更慢。

The monitoring made the subjects feel a lack of **agency** and responsibility, says Welsh, which led to bad behaviour. They were more likely to cheat while being watched because they “felt like they were being controlled, and they had less of a sense of personal responsibility”, he says. It’s a phenomenon difficult to **quantify**, but more **straightforward** to understand: when workers aren’t afforded dignity and agency, they suffer. They often **subvert** workplace rules to get back a sense of control.

威尔士说，受到监控让研究对象感到缺乏能动性和责任感，从而导致了不良行为。他说，在受到监视时，员工更有可能做小动作，因为他们“感觉自己被控制了，而且个人责任感更少。”这一现象难以量化，但较容易理解：当工人没有尊严和能动性时，他们就会感到痛苦。他们会经常破坏职场规则，以找回控制感。

Rudolf Siegel, a researcher at Universität des Saarlandes in Germany, and co-author of a recent meta-analysis on the effects of electronic monitoring, says “what was really surprising is that we found no positive effect on performance”. In other words, the data showed monitoring employees offered no benefits, and instead damaged workplace culture and **spurred counterproductive** behaviour.

德国萨尔大学的研究员鲁道夫·斯皮格尔是最近一项关于电子监控效果的综合分析的合著者，他表示：“真正令人惊讶的是，我们发现监控员工对他们的表现没有任何积极影响。”换句话说，数据显示，监控员工没有任何好处，反而会破坏职场文化，引发适得其反的行为。

There may also be ways to make being monitored a less **objectionable** experience for workers. If employers are

视，监察 | The suspects were kept under surveillance. 嫌疑犯受到监视。

**intentionally** [ɪn'tenʃənəli] *adv.*  
故意地，有意地 | She would never intentionally hurt anyone. 她从来不会故意伤害任何人。

**agency** ['eɪdʒənsi] *n.* 能动作用，力量；代理机构；（尤指政府内的）局，部，处 | Rocks are worn smooth through the agency of water. 岩石由于流水的作用被磨洗得光滑。

**quantify** ['kwɑːntɪfaɪ] *v.* 以数量表述，量化 | The benefits are difficult to quantify. 收益很难用数量来表示。

**straightforward**  
[streɪt'fɔːrwɜːd] *adj.* 简单的，易懂的，不复杂的；坦率的，坦诚的 | Installing the program is relatively straightforward. 安装这个程序相对来说比较简单。

**subvert** [səb'vɜːrt] *v.* 颠覆，破坏 | subvert public opinion 扰乱舆论

**spur** [spɜːr] *v.* 促进，刺激，鼓舞 *n.* 激励，刺激，鼓舞 | His comments spurred me on to success. 他对我的评价激励我取得了成功。

**counterproductive**  
[ˌkaʊntəprə'dʌktɪv] *adj.* 产生相反效果的，事与愿违的，适得其反的

**objectionable** [əb'dʒekʃənəbl] *adj.* 令人不快的，令人反感的 | It's his attitude that I find particularly objectionable. 让我觉得特别讨厌

**transparent** and **upfront** about the necessity and purposes of monitoring, Spiegel and Welsh's studies both showed the negative effects are greatly reduced.

或许还有一些方法可以让员工不那么反感被监控。斯皮格尔和威尔士的研究都表明，如果雇主向员工开诚布公，说明监控的必要性和目的，负面影响就会大大减少。

The biggest improvement, says Levy, is involving the workers. "A clear place to start is, in a meaningful way, to bring workers into the process of determining what technology will be used, how the data it collects will be treated and who will have access to those data, and really thinking through how the technology can help workers to accomplish their work, rather than as a threat or a **policing** tool."

利维说，最大的改进是让员工参与进来。“以一种有意义的方式，让员工参与决定使用何种监控技术、如何处理收集的数据以及谁将有权获取这些数据，并真正考虑技术如何帮助员工完成他们的工作，而不是作为一种威胁或监管工具，企业应该从这一点开始改进。”

的是他的态度。

**transparent** [træns'pærənt] *adj.* 透明的，公开的，易懂的 | The company has to make its accounts and operations as transparent as possible. 公司必须使其账目与运作尽可能地清晰透明。

**upfront** [ʌp'frʌnt] *adj.* 坦率的，诚实的；预付的 | He's been upfront about his intentions since the beginning. 他从一开始就坦白说出了他的意图。

**policing** [pə'li:sɪŋ] *n.* (对行业、活动等的) 监督，管理，检查；维持治安 | In the last twenty years the industry has had no oversight or policing. 在过去的 20 年里，该行业无人监管。

## ➤ 脉络梳理

Para. 1-2 引出现象：越来越多公司监控员工的工作情况

Para. 3-5 介绍监控员工会带来的负面影响及原因

Para. 6-7 提出改进建议：向员工说明监控的必要性和目的；考虑员工的需求

## ➤ 长难句拆解

主语 | 同位语，说明 Rudolf Siegel 的身份  
Rudolf Siegel, a researcher at Universität ..., and co-author of a ... monitoring,

谓语 | 宾语从句，作 says 的宾语  
says "what was really surprising is that we found no positive effect on performance".

• 宾语从句为主系表结构，what was really surprising 为主语从句，that we found no positive effect on performance 为表语从句