

“We are **always on**, is that really **necessary**?”

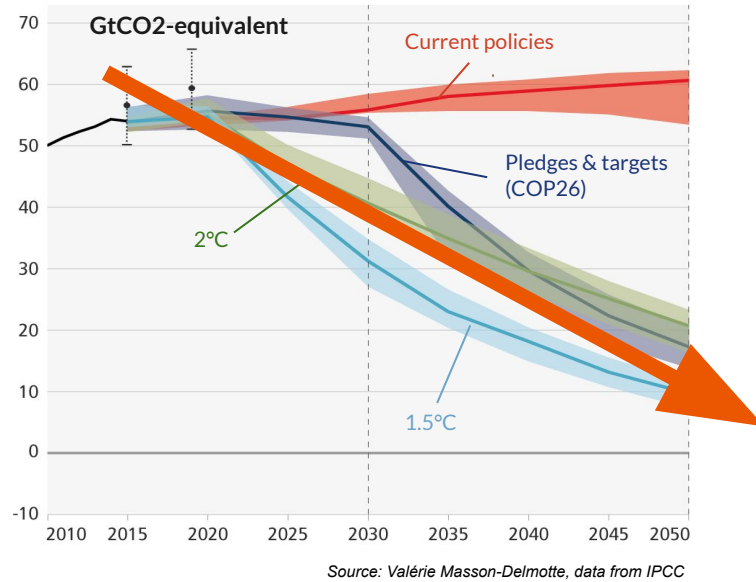
*Exploring the path to **digital sufficiency** in **flexible work***

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@ICT4S'23, Rennes, June 6-8, 2023

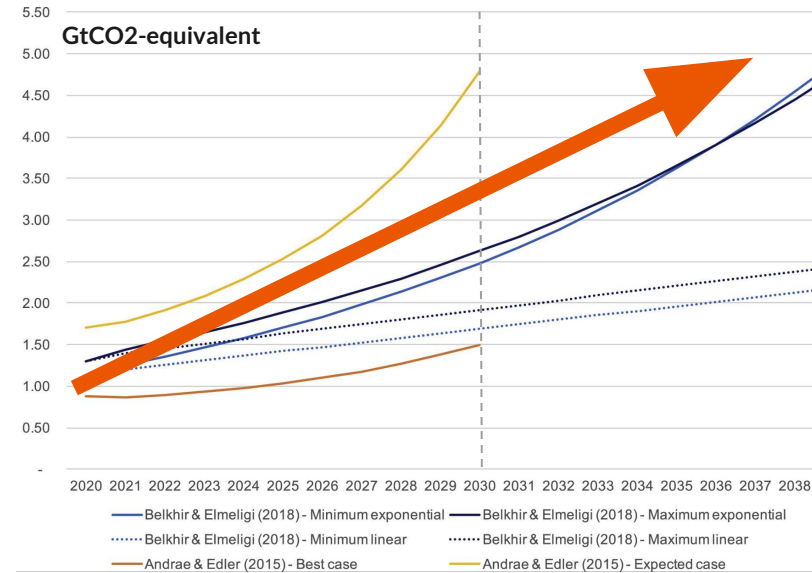
Context

What we need to do:



VS

ICT industry:



How much and which
digital usage
is *sufficient*?



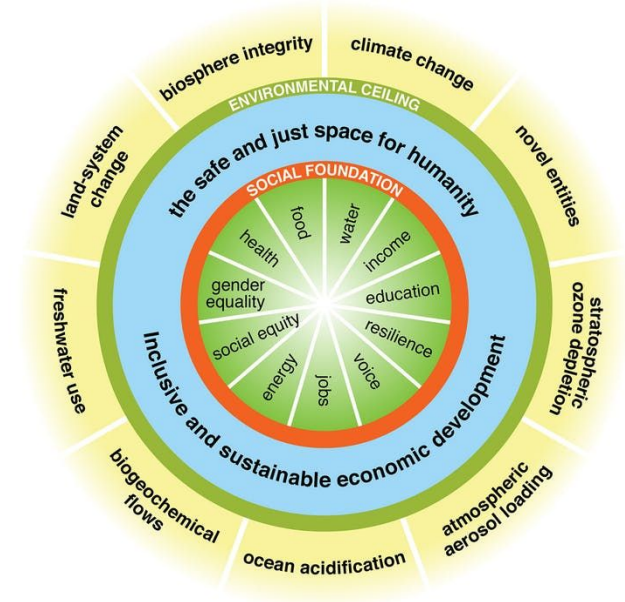
Definitions

Sufficiency measures (IPCC, 2022):

“A set of measures and daily practices that **avoid demand** for energy, materials, land and water while delivering human well-being for all within **planetary boundaries**.”

Digital sufficiency* (fr: “sobriété numérique”):

“Any strategy aimed at directly or indirectly **decreasing the absolute level** of resource and energy demand from the production or application of ICT”



Kate Raworth's "donut"

* T. Santarius et al. 2022: [“Digital sufficiency: conceptual considerations for ICTs on a finite planet”](#)

Zooming in: this study

- Case of flexible work



How much and which cloud usage
is *sufficient* for flexible work?

What do we do on our computers?
Which tasks are cloud-based?

Among the cloud-based tasks, which
ones are perceived as *necessary*, and
under which circumstances?

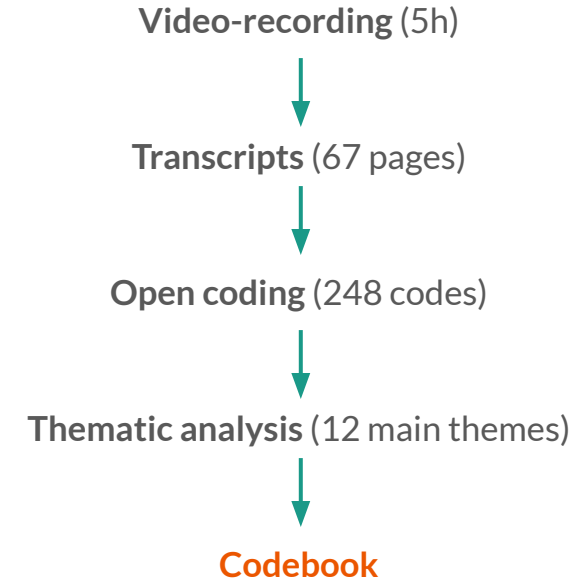
Qualitative research method

Data collection:

- 3 focus groups (Netherlands)
- 2 companies
 - a small IT company
 - a large consulting firm
- 11 participants (consultants, developers, HR, ...)



Data analysis:



Themes

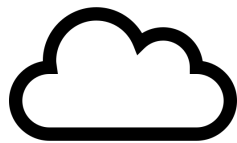
- list of digital usage
- work setting
- necessary/superfluous
- tactics towards sufficiency

List of digital usages

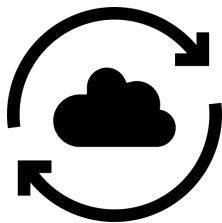
“Everything is cloud-based in the work that we do”

Emily, HR Manager, 46-55 yo

Categories of cloud-based tasks:



(1) interactive



(2) offline with regular
synchronization



(3) off-cloud

Suggestion towards sufficiency:

Moving from (1) to (2) or from (2) to (3)

Task	#
email	9
messaging	6
planning	5
online meeting	5
phone	4
reviewing	4
project management	4
data analysis	4
preparing presentation	3
giving presentation	3
gathering information (internal)	3
gathering information (external)	3
writing time	2
writing documents	2
watching video	1
taking notes	1
online training	1
online presence	1
creating visuals	1
brainstorming	1
attending digital event	1

Work setting

“For me flexible work means [...]: being there where you need to be, followed by being there where it is most efficient or most suitable, the easiest place of working”

Patrick, consultant, 36-45 yo

- locations **highly interchangeable**
- task-driven / opportunistic-driven choice of location
- case of train

Suggestions towards sufficiency:

Planning ahead for **quality work** in the **appropriate environment**

Working from **constrained environments** allows progressing on individual tasks while reducing digital usage to the essential



Necessary/superfluous: online meetings

“There’s a bunch of meetings about meetings and pre calls for the meeting and then different meetings to evaluate the meetings. It’s a lot of... yeah... meetings”

John, HR recruiter, 18-25 yo

Necessary	Superfluous
Save travel time To keep human contact Easier to arrange For team work Camera for facial expressions ...	Too many meetings Too long meetings Recurring meetings Duplication of channels ...

Suggestion towards sufficiency:

Understand the **nature** of the service rendered by the task = what should be focused on for sufficient use

Example of **tactics towards sufficiency**

human-oriented



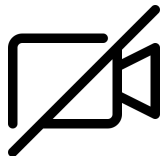
Use local, off-cloud solutions if the work doesn't need to be shared

system-oriented



Having a (low) quota on the mailbox size

human-oriented



Turning the video off in an online meeting

context-oriented



Less restrictions on professional devices

!/ not all tactics have the same potential!

... + 44 others

Conclusion



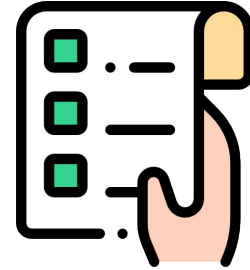
almost all the tasks performed by
our participants are **cloud-based**

tasks mostly **independent**
of their work location



more research is needed

“digital sufficiency” resonates
among them, but they need
concrete suggestions



a list of **tactics**
towards sufficiency
in flexible work



Credits

References:

- IPCC 2022: “[Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change. Summary for policymakers.](#)”

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