

Because experiments have taken a central role in machine learning research, every graduate student now have a computer at their desk. This is the most counter-productive placement of the computer IMO.

Easy access to the internet means students instinctively perform inconsequential tasks that distract them from actually doing research, such as reading news article or checking emails. Such instinctive behavior means that students frequently switch between doing work and using the computers for these tasks. Such frequent context switching rarely leads to flow state and extended period of concentration that are needed to understand complex subjects or come up with brilliant research insights.

The same situation also applies to phone, but to a much worse extent.