

In **Passage 1**, Carl Honoré writes:

- 1 Google seems like the last employer on earth that would promote slowness at work. After all, this is a company that went from a twinkle in its founders' eyes to global supremacy in just a few years. It pumps out new products at a dizzying rate. It is the reigning superpower on the speed-obsessed Web. Yet Google also understands the need to step off the spinning hamster wheel in the workplace. The company famously encourages its staff to devote twenty percent of their time to personal projects. That does not mean brushing up on World of Warcraft or updating Facebook pages or flirting with that hot new manager in Accounts. It means getting the creative juices flowing by stopping the usual barrage of targets, deadlines and distractions. In other words, allowing staff to slow down. 5

- 2 The idea is that Google employees can tackle problems that really interest them at their own pace, free to think deeply, pursue hunches and flights of fancy, make mistakes, meander down dead ends that may ultimately illuminate a better route forward. And it seems to work. Many of Google's most innovative products, from Gmail to AdSense, have grown from projects hatched during the twenty percent time. 10

- 3 The moral of the story is that, even in the high-speed modern world, slowness and creativity go hand in hand. We are only just starting to understand how the brain works, but already it seems clear that there are different ways of thinking. Malcolm Gladwell has shown how the mind can sometimes make incredibly accurate split-second decisions. Others have identified modes of thought known as Fast Thinking and Slow Thinking. The former is rational, analytical, linear, logical. It delivers clear solutions to well-defined problems. It is how computers think. It is what human beings do under pressure, when the clock is ticking, when the boss is hovering nearby with a Quarterly Assessment clipboard in hand. By contrast, Slow Thinking is intuitive, woolly and creative. It is what we do when the pressure is off, and there is time to let ideas simmer on the back burner. It yields rich, nuanced insights and sometimes surprising breakthroughs. 15

- 4 Research has shown that time pressure leads to tunnel vision and that people think more creatively when they are calm, unhurried and free from stress and distractions. We all know this from experience. Your best ideas, those eureka moments that turn the world upside down, seldom come when you're juggling emails, rushing to meet the 5pm deadline or straining to make your voice heard in a high-stress meeting. They come when you're walking the dog, soaking in the bath or swinging in a hammock. 20

- 5 Of course, Slow Thinking can be pointless without the rigours of Fast Thinking. You have to grasp, analyse and harness the ideas that bubble up from the subconscious – and often you must do so quickly. Einstein appreciated the need to marry the two modes of thought: "Computers are incredibly fast, accurate, and stupid. Human beings are incredibly slow, inaccurate, and brilliant. Together they are powerful beyond imagination." This balancing of fast and slow fits into a wider cultural shift. Everywhere, people are discovering that slowing down at the right moment can help us work, play and live better. Yet this Slow revolution can be a tough sell in an economic downturn. When recession bites, our reflex is to work harder, longer, faster. But there is so much to be gained by resisting the urge to put the pedal to the metal. 25

- 6 Returning to business as usual is not the answer to this crisis. The future will belong to those who can innovate their way back into shape – and innovation comes from knowing when to slow down. The secret is to relax and let the mind drift. You'll be amazed by where it takes you. 30

Adapted from: 'In Praise of Slow Thinking' 2009

<http://www.factsandarts.com/articles/in-praise-of-slow-thinking/>

In **Passage 2**, Lucy Kellaway writes:

- 1 When I was a student it didn't occur to me that time was something that I could manage. The hours and minutes ticked away and you could either spend them in the library where they sometimes dragged a bit, or in the pub where they skipped ahead rather more briskly. But now we are mesmerised by time. Every day the papers bring fresh evidence of how badly we are managing it. Recently I've learned that Madonna goes to bed with her BlackBerry tucked under her pillow. And that 15 million Britons binge every night on junk sleep. 5
- 2 What is so odd is that despite all this we actually have more time than we've ever had before. We live for longer, we work fewer hours than we did a hundred years ago. Thanks to tumble driers, hoovers and microwaves, we can dispatch our chores in a trice. We should have plenty of time left over for twiddling our thumbs. Yet like most people, I march through my life in a daze of busyness. I check my e-mails before breakfast and then more times during the day than I care to admit. There are articles to write, phone calls to be made, sandwiches to be eaten over the keyboard and so on. 10
- 3 The answer we are told is to slow down. Our bodies are at risk from the stress we are under and our frazzled minds are losing the ability to think at all. But would slowing down really make things better? Certainly, busyness is not what is pushing us over the edge. It is what is keeping us sane. In my view, the pressure of time bearing down is usually a force for good. It encourages us to pull our fingers out and get things done - and getting things done is surely satisfying. Dashing around doing things raises the heartbeat agreeably. And if, as we are told, it is a drug - then so what? It doesn't destroy your lungs or your liver or your bank balance and it doesn't make you go round snatching people's handbags to get your next fix. 15 20
- 4 Busyness is frowned on because it is meant to leave no time for thought, but this is nonsense too. For me at least, busyness acts as an efficient thought-filter. It is perfectly possible to have a stroke of inspiration when doing something else. Yet being busy also crowds out brooding. It is hard to fret about your own mortality when you are desperately trying to find a plumber to fix the boiler. 25
- 5 When I have idle time I tend to use it wondering what's for lunch, and it seems I'm not alone in my banality. A psychologist in Las Vegas recently did an experiment in which he gave 2,000 people beepers and told them to write down exactly what was in their heads when the beepers went off. One woman thought about Christmas tree decorations. Another spent the whole day silently repeating to herself the names of two snacks - Twinkies, Granola. 30
- 6 And in case anyone still believes that modern busyness is bad, they should read Jane Austen. In her time a worrying affliction of the middle classes was crazy idleness. In Bath, where everyone repaired for the season to be relatively busy after the languor of the countryside, the women thought nothing of doing nothing all morning and then every afternoon going to the Pump Room to watch others doing very little. And far from such stillness clearing the mind for great thoughts, much time was spent worrying over whether to wear the sprigged muslin or the plain. 35 40
- 7 The slow hysterics point the finger at technology, which they say is stealing our time and making us feel nervous and constantly on call. We are meant to disapprove when we read that Madonna has a BlackBerry under her pillow, and take it as a sign that her soul is empty. But I fail to see why taking a BlackBerry to bed with you is any more of a barrier to intimacy or relaxation than a copy of the Economist. 45
- 8 Man has always fretted about life being too fast. In his bestseller *Time: A User's Guide*, Stefan Klein argues that it is all a matter of control. If we are in control of our time, then all goes well. If we are not, then we end up frazzled.