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Notes: The Future of . . .

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*This note is a compilation of short notes on several management topics we track on a regular basis: **Technology, Place and Space, People and Organizations, and Work Design** (Technology and People/Organization are on vacation for a month). We also frequently include a brief review of an important book or article.*

The Future of Place and Space

Norway's Prime Minister Runs Country with an iPad while stranded by Volcano

The recent eruption of that volcano in Iceland (we don't dare try to pronounce it) stranded thousands of travelers (including Jim's brother and sister-in-law), but no one made more news than Jens Stoltenberg, who was pictured at New York's JFK airport overseeing his country's affairs using his brand-new Apple iPad:

<http://us.cnn.com/2010/TECH/ptech/04/16/volcano.ash.norway.ipad/index.html>

Now that's the ultimate in remote work!

Later stories indicated that Prime Minister Stoltenberg was able to catch a flight to Madrid, Spain, where he then slowly worked his way home to Oslo using ground transportation.

(Thanks to Jim's daughter Wendy, who is based in London, for first alerting us to this story)

Working at Home May Not be as Family-Friendly as We Thought

USA Today recently carried an important story about research recently conducted at MIT and Michigan State suggesting that working at home sometimes creates more problems for parents than it solves:

Today's parents might not even realize how their divided attention plays out with kids, says [Sherry Turkle](#), director of the [MIT Initiative on Technology and Self](#) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

"That mother shows up in these surveys as being with the child, but is she actually, if she's on the BlackBerry in the car?" Turkle says. "A mother putting

laundry in while the child sits on the couch is not the same as a mother concentrating on this screen and going into this virtual space. Kids are totally attuned. They know ... their parents are in la-la land."

The full article is online at: "[Working at home: Family-friendly?](#)"

[Debunking the Myths of Telecommuting](#) (April 18, 2010)

On the other hand, here's a first-person account of telecommuting (in the *New York Times* on Sunday, April 18) from someone who's been doing it for over ten years. She makes it sound pretty darn good (which is our own personal experience as well).

And that Pesky Volcano is Good for Videoconferencing Sales

And yet one more story from the *New York Times*: the travel disruptions in Europe are, not surprisingly, stimulating interest in both audio and videoconferencing as substitutes for travel:

["Stranded Travelers Turn to Videoconferencing"](#) (April 17, 2010)

The Future of Work Design

President Obama Commits the Federal Government to a More Aggressive Flexwork Policy

"I do not want to see the government close because of snow again." President Obama smiled as he opened a March 31 White House forum on Flexible Work with that observation—but he meant it:

The president said the government is committed to "practicing what we preach" with budget proposals that would increase funding for child care and provide grants to states to promote flexible work programs.

There's a good summary of the story at: "[Obamas tout benefits of a flexible workplace.](#)"

And Tory Johnson of ABC News interviews Stuart Friedman about the White House forum at "[Flex-time goes to the White House.](#)"

About the Work Design Collaborative and *Future of Work Agenda*

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