



WORKLIFEWIZARD.ORG

Your Guide to the Modern Workplace

The Big Picture

The early 21st century will be remembered as the dawn of a new technological revolution. Over the past few years, new gadgets and gizmos have redefined our social, political, and economic lives. The impacts of these changes have been studied extensively. With new Technology Studies departments sprouting in universities around the globe and terms like “bioethics” becoming common currency in all languages, philosophers and social scientists are beginning to come to grips with the moral, ethical and legal implications of technological progress.

Undoubtedly, these issues are important, but they don't help us understand how technology affects our daily lives. Since we spend most of our waking lives at work, it made a lot of sense to us to begin an investigation into these changes at the workplace. Our project, *WorklifeWizard.org* is an ambitious venture to understand the complex and constantly changing modern workplace.

We believe that only by understanding the modern workplace can improvements be made. Through our efforts we hope to enlighten, inform and assist business, employers and employees in comprehending the nature of work today as a first step towards making improvements for all.

What is the WorklifeWizard?

The tool:

The *WorklifeWizard* is accessible from any computer connected to the internet and is easily navigable thanks to its user-friendly design. Our questionnaire presents, on average, 50 questions to each respondent, allowing a completion time of no more than 20 minutes. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the respondent is offered an opportunity to compare her wage to the average wage of people in her region with similar educational backgrounds. Visitors to the *WorklifeWizard* are also offered information, trivia and games relating to the world of work.

Features include:

- A salary checker
- Advice and tips on finding a job.
- A section on labor law and economics.
- Information, discussion and debate on a wide variety of American employment issues including:
 - Affirmative Action
 - Race and Gender Discrimination
 - Privacy and the internet in the workplace
 - Telecommuting
 - Work/Life Balance
 - Healthcare and employment benefits

- Other special features include :
 - Salary Guessing Games and Worklife Trivia

The Research Effort

The *WorklifeWizard* is a collaborative effort between Harvard Law School's Labor and Worklife Program, the National Bureau of Economic Research and the team at *WageIndicator.org*. It's the American sibling of the successful *WageIndicator.org* that currently boasts over 40,000 unique visitors monthly. The US version aims to double that. *WageIndicator.org* is a project that began in Holland in 2000 and has spread to over 10 countries in Europe, Asia (China, India) and South America (Brazil).

The project is headed by Harvard labor economist Professor Richard Freeman (freeman@nber.org), who is faculty co-chair of the Labor and Worklife Program, and coordinated by sociologist and political scientist Dr. Isabelle Ferreras (iferreras@law.harvard.edu), Research Associate at the Labor and Worklife Program. The website is updated and maintained by Jason Anastasopoulos (janastasopoulos@law.harvard.edu), Web and Publications Coordinator at the Labor and Worklife Program.

There are lots of surveys out there, what makes the WorklifeWizard unique?

Unanswered Questions: the need for a permanent survey tool

The *WorklifeWizard* survey is designed by our team of social scientists and economists at Harvard. Although the survey contains standard questions taken from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey, these are asked primarily to assure statistical validity. What makes our survey unique are our special "modules".

The modules are individual sets of questions that will enable us to survey aspects of the world of work that no existing survey covers in any systematic fashion. The *WorklifeWizard* hopes to address this lack of data by becoming a permanent research tool covering issues in the workplace at an exceedingly low cost.

Modules: making the tool available to the public

Four modules consisting of approximately five to ten questions each are integrated in the questionnaire and are replaced by new ones every other month. The survey is thus designed as a research tool accessible to those interested in gathering data on module topics. We will consider requests from the business community, journalists, unions or any other organization interested in gaining knowledge about a specific aspect of the world of work.

Here are some examples of our modules:

- How Did You Find Your Job Module
 - Did you get your current job through a friend or relative?
 - For your most recent job, what would you say was the most important factor in your hiring?
- Workload Module
 - How often do you bring work home with you at night?
 - Do you work more than 40 hours per week?
- Internet Impact Module:
 - What effect, if any, has the internet had on your work?
 - What effect, if any, has it had on your workplace?
 - Many employees have been fired for posting comments on "blogs" (internet web logs) both related and unrelated to their work. Do you consider such actions too intrusive to employees or are they justified under certain circumstances?

Usefulness

- *Knowledge about society:* The *WorklifeWizard* will help researchers better understand the dynamics of the workplace and will lead to a host of new PhD dissertations and books about the world of work.
- *Knowledge for employers and employees:* Knowledge is the first step toward improvement. By furthering an understanding of work, the *WorklifeWizard* will greatly contribute to a happier and more efficient workplace. Employers will better understand the needs and wants of their workforce and employees will enter the workforce better informed about how people get their jobs and how their employers compare to others.
- *Knowledge for the general public:* The *WorklifeWizard* will be an informative, fun and useful site for anyone who wants to know more about work. An effort will be made to publicize the findings of the survey to the general public by making them available to journalists.

How can you help the WorklifeWizard?

The *WorklifeWizard* needs to attract as much traffic as possible in order to raise its number of respondents/survey takers. You can help by displaying a banner on your website (ask us for a personalized banner) or placing a link and encouraging your readers to take the survey. By talking about this effort and echoing results from the survey (that we will post on a regular basis), you will also help us make this effort known.

Timeline: Launching early 2006

Please visit www.worklifewizard.org home page to get a taste of our website. We plan to officially launch the survey at the beginning of 2006.

For More Information Please Contact:

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