COVID-19 Shifted Patent Applications toward Technologies that Support Working from Home

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Post-COVID Working Arrangements: Less WFH than Now, But 4-5 Times as Much as Pre-COVID

Share of paid days worked from home

Notes: Data are from an original survey that we designed, fielded by QuestionPro and IncQuery in May, July, August, September/October, November, and December 2020, with 5,000 responses in August and 2,500 in other months. We re-weight raw responses to match the share of working-age respondents in the 2010-2019 CPS in each \{industry x state x earnings\} cell.

Chart reproduced from “Why Working From Home Will Stick,” by Jose Maria Barrero, Nick Bloom and Steven J. Davis.
The flow of patent applications that support remote interactivity and other WFH technologies tripled from January to September 2020, and it continues to rise.

March 2013 Spike Due to America Invents Act

Figure 2. U.S. Patent Application Counts, Adjusted for Lags between Filings and Publications, Monthly from January 2010 to September 2020
Figure 3. Percent of New Patent Applications that Support WFH Technologies, January 2010 to September 2020

% of WFH patents

Feb. 2020

Ratio of Raw Counts  Ratio of Adjusted Counts