

# Cyberloafing: A Content Analysis of the Emerging Literature

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This study reports on bibliographic citation data for the term *Cyberloafing* identified in the comprehensive database *PROQUEST Complete*. The keyword search, which targeted articles only, produced 76 total 'hits'; of these 62 were specific to cyberloafing. A content analysis strategy classified articles across several designated topical areas. The major areas of research attention, to date, are focused on workplace monitoring, typology concerns, causative factors, organizational justice, and deterrence theory. Moreover, neglected areas of investigatory efforts include salient issues such as personality factors, ethics training, organizational commitment, telecommuting, and organizational culture/values. Future bibliographic research should examine a) trends in non-periodical literature such as books or conference papers, and b) legal-related research in law reviews and case law.

Cyberloafing has been defined as "non-productive workplace-related online behaviors that are predominantly opaque in nature" (Lim, 2012). Typical cyberloafing behaviors include personal Email exchanges, web-surfing, online shopping, social networking activities, and text messaging. In addition, inappropriate and potentially illegal activities such as cyber-bullying, viewing adult entertainment sites, sexual harassment, and e-harassment are considered within the domain or purview of cyberloafing (see Piotrowski, 2012a). Like most innovations, the Internet and concomitant technologies have the potential for abuse and can be used for nefarious purposes. Not surprisingly, the inappropriate use of online and wireless technology in the workplace appears to be ubiquitous in these modern times, and can be an internal threat to organizational functions in terms of productivity, morale, organizational justice, and a potential source of liability.

By all accounts, the topic of cyberloafing has generated much research attention and remains an emerging issue across several aca-

demical disciplines (Griffiths, 2010). Thus, it would be of interest to gauge the specific aspects of this emergent workplace phenomenon that have garnered the attention of scholars and researchers. In order to address this issue, a systematic review of the extant literature was performed to identify published articles on cyberloafing. To that end, this paper presents a bibliometric analysis on the topical areas that are emphasized and deemphasized in journal articles.

## Method

Content analysis is a major methodological approach used in trying to identify research trends in the literature and several reports, based on this research strategy, have recently appeared (e.g., Piotrowski, 2012b). Since the aim of the current study was to obtain a comprehensive and inclusive listing of journal articles, a preliminary keyword search of several major academic databases was performed; for the term *Cyberloafing*, the following research output was obtained: ABI/INFORM (n=55), EBSCO Business Source Complete (n=17), PsycINFO (n=17), PROQUEST Complete (n=76). Based on this, PROQUEST, which combines 72 cross-disciplinary databases, was chosen as the search platform (conducted on January 23, 2013). Then, each of 76 articles was reviewed

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individually to determine the major focus of the research study, based on the content of the article. A scoring template for tabulation of frequency counts across topical areas was constructed. The author attempted to determine the major focus of each article in an objective manner. Of the 76 articles, 14 were deemed unrelated to the specific issue of Cyberloafing and, thus the data analysis was based on 62 journal articles.

### Results and Discussion

The results of this bibliometric exercise indicate that although the topic of cyberloafing is an emerging concern in practice, research efforts, to date, are somewhat focused on a rather narrow range of topics or issues (Table 1). In fact, the field appears to be struggling with definitional and typology aspects of cyberloafing (see Blanchard & Henle, 2008), and the current analysis confirms this fact. In addition, there seems to be much research attention on the attributes and limitations in the

application of the deterrence model (D'Arcy et al., 2009) and acceptable Internet use policies in the workplace (Ugrin & Pearson, 2013; Zoghbi Manrique de Lara, 2006).

Surprisingly, there appears to be limited research on a) employee attitudes toward non work-related behaviors, b) the reality of a wireless/social media/ high-tech generation of young workers, and c) training programs designed to enhance organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and teamwork. Advances in the understanding and management of cyberloafing would be more forthcoming when researchers focus investigatory efforts on salient issues like personality dynamics, individual differences factors, corporate culture, and organizational values (see Liberman et al., 2011). The current findings, based on a content analysis of emerging literature, provide a snap-shot on major areas of focus on cyberloafing and highlight neglected areas of research.

Table 1  
*Rank Order, Based on Frequency Counts, for the Areas of Focus in  
Cyberloafing Research*

<u>Major Focus Areas</u>		<u>Neglected Areas of Research</u>	
Monitoring by organization	7	Ethics training	0
Definitional issues/Typology	7	Organizational commitment	0
Causative factors	6	Role under-load	0
Organizational-interactional justice	5	Teamwork	0
Deterrence theory	4	Telecommuting	0
Company policy/Code of conduct	3	Theory X/Theory Y	0
Unproductive work behaviors	3	Socialization factors	0
Workplace conduct norms	3	Process value analysis	0
Disciplinary actions	2	Job enrichment	0
Personality factors	2	Organization development	0
Employees' attitudes	2	Comparative management	0
Prevalence/incidence data	2		
Cybercivism	2		

*Note.* Values indicate number of articles, across designated categories, in PROQUEST Complete. Of the 62 articles, 14 topical areas appeared only once and thus not reported in this tally.

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