



JÄVLA K*KDATOR!



And then the system freezes. A common reaction to that is that you close the laptop, let out a huge sigh, go and get a cup of coffee, maybe even just go home.

- Frans, 50, editor

*Jävla k*kdator!* is an exhibition and a documentation about the frustrating and complicating aspects of an increasingly digital working life – digital breakdowns, lost passwords, surveillance, illogical manuals, yet another impossible system to learn, and the sense of a mental meltdown when hours are spent trying to fix technical problems.

Here, you can dive deeper into the documentation, in which various white-collar workers were interviewed and photographed at their workplace. Read about their experiences of the digital work environment and some answers to the question: what is digital work environment, really?

*Jävla k*kdator* is a collaboration between Unionen and the Museum of Work.

The photographs were taken by Daniel Nilsson.

*From 7 March–7 May 2026, you can visit the physical exhibition at the Museum of Work. Read more and leave your own story, here: [Jävla k*kdator!](#)*

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You don't really leave work behind when you come home either, and I know my wife sometimes complains that I check my phone too much.

- **Andreas, 42, solutions architect**

Well, say I need to access some place on our intranet where I have important information to help a customer, and then it becomes a problem because the machinery doesn't move forward, so to speak. And then you also have to keep track of it, like okay, I can't solve this now, I'll solve it tomorrow, but then you also have to remember it tomorrow, and it builds up. So you end up juggling a lot of balls in the air because of that.

Do you have any kind of system for yourself to keep track of those things?

Yes, we actually have a shared system for the whole store where we have a so-called "problem box." Okay, this is something we need to keep track of, and then we actively check it several times a day. There we can write things down on paper for when the computers aren't working. So then we go old school and use pen and paper.

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The problem now is also that since there has been so much going on, even a small issue feels big, because it's kind of lodged in your spine now as an irritation. You just want it to work. It's one thing if I actively make a mistake. Okay, I pressed the wrong button. That's the human factor. But I know I pressed the right button and did everything right, and then it still goes wrong. That creates a lot of frustration. Because if I or my colleagues make mistakes, which we all do, nobody's perfect, then we can look at it and say, okay, how can we change routines, what can we do differently so this doesn't happen again? You can make a plan for that, put safeguards in place. But when it's something you can't plan for, you're completely powerless. It's just like, okay, now it's broken, yeah And it's hard not to take it personally even though you know you've actually done everything you're supposed to and done it right.

- **Danail, 42, store manager**

It's usually easier to keep track of the systems you work with every day or every week. It's the ones that are a bit sneakily reoccurring with longer intervals, then something might need to be updated before you start, or you've forgotten how to do it and have to read the instructions again, or you make a mistake.

- **Måns, 58, administrator**

It's very overwhelming in the beginning when you're new, learning all these different systems. But I've learned which systems are used for what. And now we've started developing new systems and transitioning from one to another. So it's constantly this feeling of, okay, now we have to learn this new one, and it doesn't work the same way as the old one did. And then you get a bit frustrated that the things I used to be able to do, I can't do now.

I think everyone at the company, even those responsible for developing the systems, are kind of fumbling in the dark. None of us are really experts in programming and digital systems. We're all just holding each other's hands and getting through this together. And those who are supposed to conduct internal training don't fully understand the systems either. So there's been a lot of, well, the new systems we've started working with, they're new for everyone. Even those responsible for implementing them don't know everything. So it's hard to hold internal trainings. And that's led to frustration because things are moving very fast and we don't really know where we're heading or how we're supposed to use these systems.

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Another problem is that everything costs money when you bring in external systems. So it becomes a tug-of-war. How much money can we spend on bringing someone in externally to fix everything and hold training sessions for us? And how much can we handle internally to save those costs?

- **Malin, 28, security advisor**

Sometimes you see people who don't even go to lunch. "You need to go to lunch," you see the manager message right away. But I've had colleagues who have been offline and sitting working just to catch up.

- **Eric, 48, case officer**

I worked at another company where it turned out that every email sent by someone in the company was copied to the CEO and the owner. So that was real surveillance.

The reason I noticed was that I was standing at his computer once and saw an email I had written to someone completely different. Nothing improper at all, I just recognized the email. Then I looked into it further and found out he had set it up so that he received a copy of every email sent.

How did that feel to see?

Awful. It wasn't the final straw that made me resign, but it was probably the second-to-last straw. No, it was creepy. And I get it, I sometimes wonder myself. Is someone watching when I'm logged into the systems? Is someone checking when I send emails? What I'm sending? Who I'm sending them to? It's very easy. What websites I visit on my computer. The Public Employment Service, should I go on there just to mess with them and see if they come and give me extra attention? No, those thoughts absolutely occur, and some people are probably more nervous and afraid than I am. But I can feel monitored, absolutely.

- **Anders, 54, business navigator**

WHAT IS DIGITAL WORK ENVIRONMENT...

...for Danail?

For me, it's new routines and ways of working. That's digital stress, and sometimes you wish things were more tested before being implemented. And I also notice with age that you're not as quick-thinking anymore. And there are new programs to learn all the time. Development is great, but you have to keep up with it yourself. And that creates stress too. What happens the day I can't keep up? Will I lose my job? That sits in the back of the mind and creates stress. When I got this job, we worked in one way. Today we don't work that way anymore.

...for Malou?

Well, digital work environment, I would say, equals work environment for me. There isn't really any separation. It's like saying before, working with marketing, whether it's supposed to be digital marketing, no, that distinction doesn't really exist anymore. It's just part of it.

But digital stress, I would equate with stress today. I don't think there's any separation anymore, because it's just stress. Together with everything else, so to speak, it's kind of become a normal part of things. And I think it's not about my computer crashing anymore, or not being able to pay or access invoices at work, or Word not functioning. Now it's more about the availability, I think. The fact that you can be reached all the time. I think that's harder. Definitely.

...for Frans?

The first thing that comes to mind is being able to manage and navigate this large number of systems, different systems. That's what I think of first. Then, if I keep thinking about it, digital meeting formats come up. Hardware comes pretty far down the list. You just assume it should work. And it doesn't always. But it's surprising how little you think about it. It's just there. I'd say that's the order.

And digital stress?

I don't really know what distinguishes digital stress from other stress, because it's not the tasks or systems being digital that creates the stress, it's that there are so many systems. They could just as well have been physical. It could be some kind of Kafka situation where you have to go to 15 different archives to complete tasks, that

would probably feel just as stressful. So I'm not sure what makes this stress specifically digital. But digitalization certainly makes it easier to quickly implement new systems, or attempt to.

...for Agneta?

Well, I experience my work environment as very physical and mental, or how should I put it? It's built so much on interpersonal relationships and experiences and, like, in-the-moment things, which really are just about physical presence. That's really what I, when I think about my work environment, not the digital one, but my work environment overall, that's what carries it for me.

But otherwise, yeah what does digital work environment mean to me? I would probably think of it in terms of it having become something we are so dependent on today, and that it has made us so vulnerable. Because when the systems don't work, when something happens, we become kind of paralyzed and locked. "Well then it's not possible!" Just like that. And then I might think, well, then let's do it this way instead. "No, that won't work, because then there will be consequences there. We have to do it in this system, otherwise we won't get them out like that." You know. That's probably what I think most, that it affects us in so many parts of our work. If it doesn't work, we're completely stuck.

...according to Unionen?

Unionen describes digital work environment as both the technical tools used at work and the conditions for how they are used. It is broader than just the technical aspects, such as computers, screens, and software. It also includes how tools affect ways of working, health, and the ability to recover outside of work, or how systems interact and how much attention they require.

Several things can lead to stress and a poor digital work environment, such as having to use multiple systems or communication channels simultaneously, or not being sufficiently trained in how a system works. The digital work environment should be included in systematic work environment management at the workplace, something that must be reviewed annually according to the Swedish Work Environment Authority.

Read more on Unionen's website: [Jävla kukdator! | Unionen](#)