

Working in Times of the Pandemic

First-aid kit on distributed working helps companies whose staff operate from home



The first-aid kit for successful distributed working supports companies in reorganizing their work during a crisis situation. (Screenshot: "First-aid kit")

With their “First-aid kit for successful distributed working,” Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and Mittelstand 4.0 Kompetenzzentrum Usability (Usability Competence Center 4.0 for Medium-sized Enterprises) want to help small and medium-sized companies switch to entirely decentralized work in times of a crisis. The compact handout includes tips and recommendations for a functioning IT infrastructure, a mission statement, and successful virtual communication and additionally highlights the psychological dimension of working from home.

For many small and medium-sized companies, the epidemiological social distancing requirement means that their work organization is subjected to a special kind of crash test. Within a short term, they have to switch from traditional ways of working to a system of spatially distributed actors. The “First-aid kit for successful distributed working” developed by KIT’s Institute of Information Systems and Marketing (IISM) and the Usability Competence Center is designed to cope with this challenge: In the areas of IT infrastructure, mission statement and regulations, communication, mindset and behavior, typical problems

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Further materials

“First-aid kit for successful distributed working”, PDF for download:

<https://www.kompetenzzentrum-usability.digital/angebote/demonstratoren/social-distancing-social-awareness/erste-hilfe-kit-fuer-erfolgreiches-verteiltes-arbeiten> (in German)

and solutions, sustainable establishment, and software solutions, the four-page paper provides detailed information on decentralized work.

“Our first-aid kit is very concise and easy to understand,” says Ivo Benke, researcher of IISM and coordinator of KIT’s Usability Competence Center. “In the current situation,” Benke adds, “it is not about publishing a comprehensive scientific study. Our first-aid kit presents the findings of literature searches and empirical surveys as well as own experience to companies. It is a collection of best practices or best advices that are easy to understand and can be implemented quickly.”

IISM’s first-aid kit developed by Ivo Benke, Nevena Nikolajevic, and Alexander Mädche is part of the “Social distancing and social awareness” project carried out by the Usability Competence Center. It was established under the “Mittelstand-Digital” (Digitalization of Medium-sized Enterprises) initiative of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) and supports small and medium-sized companies in designing digital technologies easy to use and positive to experience.

Being “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association,” KIT creates and imparts knowledge for the society and the environment. It is the objective to make significant contributions to the global challenges in the fields of energy, mobility and information. For this, about 9,300 employees cooperate in a broad range of disciplines in natural sciences, engineering sciences, economics, and the humanities and social sciences. KIT prepares its 24,400 students for responsible tasks in society, industry, and science by offering research-based study programs. Innovation efforts at KIT build a bridge between important scientific findings and their application for the benefit of society, economic prosperity, and the preservation of our natural basis of life. KIT is one of the German universities of excellence.

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