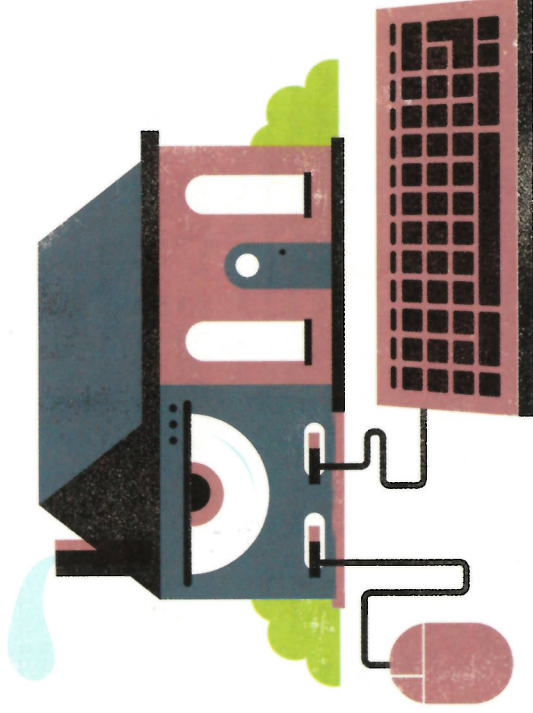


WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? TELEWORKING

This quaint term conjures images of people sitting in their home office, black Bakelite phone and Gant charts at their elbows. If the label is stuck in the past the practice isn't, for, with all the information-age kit available, 'working from home' is now much easier and more efficient and pleasant than ever before. Though that does depend on where and how you live. The office remains a refuge from the crying baby or unemployed partner. The home may be cluttered enough without you having to dedicate space to your employer without getting a penny of the savings back. And without the threat of scrutiny, your weak will may succumb to irrelevant surfing, household chores, or, worst of all, daytime telly. It also contains the threat that out of sight is out of mind. You're not really on the team, and decisions affecting you will get taken when you're not in the room. Invisible people don't make the short-list for the plum jobs. Yet, for many, the experience is liberating and fulfilling. You can be a responsible, self-determining adult again. Indeed,



technology has now enabled a flexibility way beyond mere homeworking. More and more work can be done in any space or at any time, which is wonderful... so long as you know when to stop.

Nigel Nicholson is professor of organisational behaviour at the London Business School