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# Email Stress Overwhelming to Some Workers

By Rick Nauert PhD  
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New research on worker stress has discovered that many employees feel overwhelmed by checking their email inbox and feeling the need to respond immediately to most emails.



In a study of 200 people in Britain, Karen Renaud and Judith Ramsay discovered that more a third checked their email inbox every 15 minutes and most checked it at least once an hour.

A third of those surveyed said they felt stressed by the volume of emails they received and felt as though every email needed a reply immediately. More than a quarter of those studied felt “driven” by the pressure to respond to emails.

Thirty-eight percent of employees studied felt comfortable enough waiting to reply to emails when they felt like it, a day or two later.

Some people studied checked and viewed emails up to 40 times an hour, according to cameras that recorded subjects’ email-checking and viewing behavior.

Such constant email checking and viewing is leading many workers to increased feelings of stress and being overwhelmed by the amount of email they receive.

Researchers found that many workers felt “invaded” by e-mails interrupting them as they tried to concentrate on their work. They felt pressured to switch applications to see whether the e-mails were urgent.

Female workers felt under greater pressure to respond than men. The researchers found that while “e-mail has become an indispensable tool in business [...] there is evidence that e-mail can exert a powerful hold over its users and that many computer users experience stress as a result of e-mail-related pressure.”

Source: M Hair, J Ramsay and K Renaud. Ubiquitous Connectivity & Work-Related Stress, 2007. *Handbook of Research on Virtual Workplaces and the New Nature of Business Practices*. (In publication.)

## About Rick Nauert PhD



**Dr. Rick Nauert** has over 25 years experience in clinical, administrative and academic healthcare. He is currently an associate professor for Rocky Mountain University of Health Professionals doctoral program in health promotion and wellness. Dr. Nauert began his career as a clinical physical therapist and served as a regional manager for a publicly traded multidisciplinary rehabilitation agency for 12 years. He has masters degrees in health-fitness management and healthcare administration and a doctoral degree from The University of Texas at Austin focused on health care informatics, health administration, health education and health policy. His research efforts included the area of telehealth with a specialty in disease management.

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<http://psychcentral.com/news/2007/08/15/email-stress-overwhelming-to-some-workers/1132.html>