# Only Half of UK Employees Would Opt Out of Monitoring Software Despite Privacy Concerns

SMEs seek new ways to manage employees in remote and hybrid work environments. One option is employee monitoring software, but challenges arise.

THAMES EGHAM, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, March 17, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the advent of remote and hybrid working, small to midsize enterprises (SMEs) are looking for new ways to manage their employees. One digital technology that can help is employee monitoring software, but deploying it brings challenges.
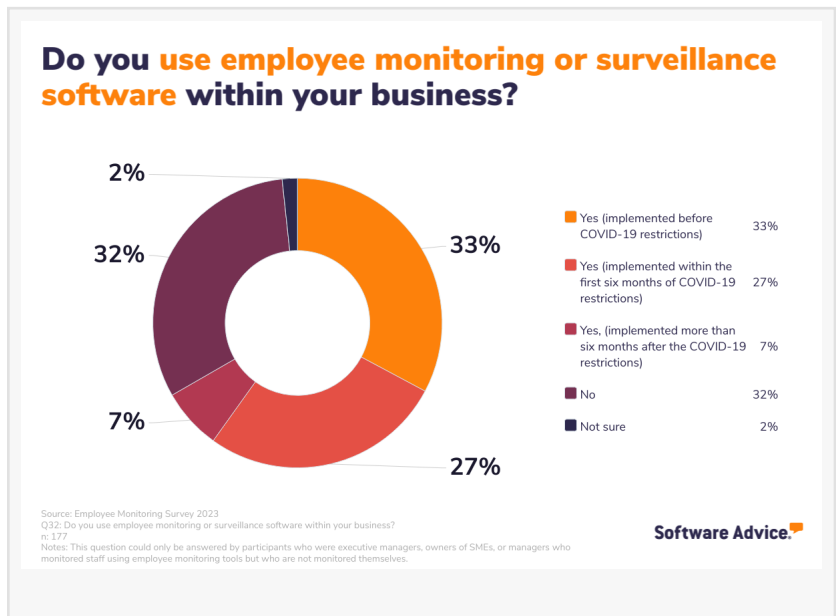
A recent survey of over 1,000 employees and managers at SMEs in the UK, conducted by Software Advice UK between January and February 2023, found that 37% of SMEs in the sample use employee monitoring software. Since the pandemic, remote and hybrid working has become more common, and 47% of the people in the survey work either fully remotely (15%) or in a hybrid model (32%). Having potentially half their staff out of the workplace presents SMEs with an obvious challenge: how can they maintain an overview of what teams are doing when not everyone is in the same place?

Of those employees whose companies use monitoring software, one-quarter (25%) use the tools to monitor others, but they are not monitored themselves. 54% said they have monitored themselves, while also monitoring others. The survey found that the most common use case that monitored employees consented to was attendance tracking (46%), followed by time management (35%) and monitoring of digital communications (32%).

There is the chance when deploying this software that staff may see the move as an invasion of privacy, which can put SMEs at risk of lowering morale and losing talented team members. However, employee monitoring software doesn't necessarily mean spying on people's browsing

habits. It is a versatile technology that can be used to track attendance, tasks, and performance, saving employees time by automatically logging data about their work so they can get on with their job.

Despite concerns about invasion of privacy, employees see some benefits to monitoring software. Among the group as a whole (those who are monitored and those who are not), more than one-third (35%) said that mistakes can be caught before they escalate. A similar number (34%) cited the fact that employers have more visibility of high and low work performers as an advantage.

The survey found that employees may not be comfortable being monitored via their computers or phones, even when those devices are provided by their employer. It was also discovered that employees (both those who are currently monitored and those who are not) showed differing levels of comfort depending on how the tools are being used. For instance, employees reported feeling comfortable overall with monitoring of attendance tracking (74%), workload management (68%), and time management (57%). However, 68% were uncomfortable with the idea of their workspace being monitored via video surveillance through webcams, time-lapse photos, or screenshots.

SMEs that want to roll out monitoring software should consider how comfortable their workforce is with it. Companies should ensure that they understand all aspects of the issue before making a decision. This survey offers some insight into how workers in the UK view the situation, and in the second part, we will explore the topic from a management perspective.

Software Advice is committed to helping SMEs make informed decisions about employee monitoring software.

David Jani, Content Analyst at Software Advice UK, comments:

Employee monitoring can be a sensitive issue for both employers and employees. In our findings, we saw a mixed picture. Whilst 53% of surveyed employees said that they would opt out of monitoring if given the choice, they also expressed opinions that they can be beneficial in catching mistakes, helping employers gain more visibility of high (and also low) work performance, as well as better understandings of staff workloads.

However, many concerns were also expressed about the invasion of privacy, higher stress and negative effects on morale, suggesting care must be taken when implementing employee monitoring. Our findings suggest that it is important to use employee monitoring software in ways that don't put staff under too much pressure nor track them in ways that seem punitive, unnecessary, or too invasive.

About Software Advice

Software Advice helps businesses navigate the software buying journey. Industry-specific advisors guide people through the selection process and provide personalised software recommendations. Founded in 2005, Software Advice has helped nearly 800,000 businesses find the right software for their specific needs through 1-on-1 advice, objective research, and actionable insights. Software Advice also features over 1,000,000 verified user reviews to ensure people feel confident in their technology decisions.

Study Methodology

Data for Software Advice's Employee Monitoring Survey 2023 was collected in January and February 2023. Results comprise responses from 1,005 UK participants. The criteria to be selected for this study are as follows:

UK residents
Aged between 18 and 65 years old
Full-time or part-time employed at a company with 2-250 employees

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