

Plugging In on Your Day Off

Working From Home Comes at a Price: Annoyed Families

It was bright and early on a Saturday morning, and Marc Diana felt rested, relaxed and ready for the office.

The office, on a weekend? As CEO of a booming online lead exchange company, there are no lazy weekends for Diana. And he's not alone. More Americans seem unable, or unwilling, to leave work at work.

"Between the cell phones and the Blackberries, and the computers, the e-mails, the voice mails, it's very difficult to leave that behind when the weekend comes," workplace expert Susan P. Ascher said.

And with work so easily accessible, office-place competitiveness seeps into the weekends.

"They feel that need to show their boss that they're constantly available, they're constantly plugged in," Ascher said. "Because if they're not, he may turn to the next person and see them as perhaps dispensable."

Vacations may not look much better than weekends. A study of 6,800 workers done this year by Careerbuilder.com showed 20 percent planned to stay in touch with the office on their vacation this year.

But while working on vacations may be good for business, they're not as good family life.

Diana's wife Dorothy is frustrated by what seems to be his never-ending work schedule.

"An hour turns into two, three, four ... I'm waiting. ... He's on the phone, he's e-mailing," she vented. "I try not to nag, but it gets old after four, five hours of me sitting on the couch just waiting for us to do something on the weekend besides stare at the computer."

But, he said, it's all in an effort to keep ahead of his competitors -- making calls, crunching numbers and sending e-mails.

"I use the weekends as kind of my quiet time to take a step back and look at the business and see what I can do try and help propel it forward," Diana said.