

Steve Kimberley

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In the age of mobile internet and phones that appear to be smarter than us, we often forget who makes it all possible. Who ensures that our back-ups are stored safely on a departmental server? Who takes care of our constant need to be connected by making sure the WiFi works in every corner of the building? In cases when we cannot connect to the internet, or when we face IT troubles we have no idea of how to solve, there is usually one go-to person in every department that will try and fix it. In the Faculty of Classics this is Steve. He is responsible for IT and any related services, which includes for example maintenance of networks and servers, development of future improvements and providing advice to members of staff.

He started working part-time for the Faculty of Classics in 2005, while still running his own business alongside. Since January 2006 he has been employed full-time. His contract does not specify any set hours: his line managers are focussed on work output instead! Hence, he can arrange his own schedule: it rarely happens that he is in the office before 10am, and it is similarly rare that he leaves before 6pm. During the day, for example, he can take time out in case of family emergencies and, if necessary, he comes in on weekends and holidays. Although this might appear to be solely for personal comfort and convenience, there is more to it than meets the eye.

The IT and associated systems do not require constant attention and much of Steve's work is not directly dependent on what his colleagues and other employees of the Faculty do on a daily basis. His work simply does not require a 9-5 schedule. Staying later than everybody else has a number of advantages. During a busy working day it is often difficult to spend a large chunk of time to resolve a particular issue without being interrupted by phone calls, emails or other things that require immediate attention. Tasks like re-booting servers and reconfiguring the network are better done in the evening: if problems surface that are not easily dealt with, Steve can stay late and make sure that everything is back up and running in the morning. He even spent one Christmas holiday upgrading the servers because that was least disruptive to all other members of staff.

Most members of staff readily accept his hours and appreciate that in the evenings he is still available should they require assistance with equipment for e.g. evening seminars. If anybody has IT related troubles they can also reach him on his faculty mobile phone at any reasonable hour.

For Steve the flexibility offered by his job is an important factor for the quality of his life and his job satisfaction. He is very happy in his current position and hopes to continue his job until his retirement.