Linnæus University

Work/Life Balance and Smartphones:

Can a Smartphone make a difference?

Kristin Bomber

May 31, 2010

Examiner: Henrik Ferdfelt

Acknowledgements

The thesis process is hard work but at the same time challenging and interesting. It could not have been completed without help and therefore I would like to extend thanks to the following:

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This provides a short summary of this thesis including main points from each major section.

Background and Problem Discussion

My interest in doing this research stemmed from time spent with a friend who was always on their BlackBerry, however academic research has areas where not much research has been done previously including the qualitative research on work/life balance, positive crossover of work/life balance, newness of Smartphone technology, and consequences of constant connectivity. This study hopes to eliminate some of the gaps in these areas of research and proposes two research questions: **So what does owning a Smartphone mean for work life and home life? Most importantly can this phone help people towards or assist with the balance they are so looking for or do the phones not impact this balance and just assist in the work life and home life realms separately?**

Method

A qualitative approach using constructionist and interpretivist views were used to conduct the research. Empirical material was collected during phone interviews with participants in the USA, while supporting material was gathered from conference papers, academic articles, websites, and textbooks.

Theory

There are two major themes within this paper, work/life balance and Smartphone technology. For work/life balance a common understanding was reached that work and personal life should be kept happy but that doesn't mean equal. Also discussed was research about people that put up boundaries in their lives to try and separate things, one group of people likes to have work and personal separate but one group likes them combined. Research also presents that there are consequences for setting up boundaries but that having the ability to choose where these boundaries are makes for a much happier situation. On the technology side of research there is support for these devices being used to manage people's different selves through communication from being more connected to people to feeling left out when the technology is not there. Also mentioned is how people adapt the devices to fit new and unique situations that the devices may not have been intended to be used for.

Results

The results section of this thesis brings interesting observations about the participants and their use of the Smartphones. Many participants wanted to own the phones for checking email, but some had them for the calendar and address book features. Email was the most popular work feature with texting being the most popular personal feature. The Smartphones made work faster and more convenient, but took up personal time and had a negative effect on some participants. Surprisingly work/life balance was not really affected by these phones with participants having set practices in place already. But on the personal side with being reached 24/7 not all participants were happy about this some turning off their phones to sleep. An interesting observation was the comments about not having a phone for a short period of time, participants had backup plans if their phones got lost and several referred to feeling lost without the technology. Though even with these negative draws participants still responded positively when asked about how they would view these phones.

Analysis

When the empirical material was combined with the theory to start answering the research questions we find that owning a Smartphone means working faster and easier and being more connected for personal life, but also being frustrated and annoyed by the constant connectivity. As far as helping people have a work/life balance, Smartphones have a minimal impact as routines are already in place or their jobs require constant crossover. The Smartphones are more of an asset when used in the work and personal life realms separately. There is evidence of personal life invading more into work life than vice versa. There is also evidence that personal life is very hard to turn off and would seem there is no balance to this which should be negative. However the participants are happy and don't seem to mind overly much, and as the research has said it's about being happy and having well being rather than having work and life be equal.

Introduction

The following section will provide reasons for doing this study, both personal and from an academic point of view. It will reveal the purpose of the study and walk through the problemization of work/life balance and Smartphones.

Background

Let me explain a little about how this project got started and why I am so interested in this topic. I have a friend who has a BlackBerry, and it never stops going off; and when I say never I mean never ever stops. When you first spend time with this friend the phone can get on your nerves with the constant ringing and buzzing, but after a while you start to just ignore it and the phone becomes part of the background and part of the person and the friendship. Though I do have to admit that the phone comes in really handy when in emergencies, like trying to contact the U.S. embassy in Rome. Then along comes an exchange year in Sweden and at the very end the task of writing a thesis. Trying to find a topic I was interested in was hard, but my friend suggested I do a study on BlackBerrys (I think at the time they were typing or emailing away on their phone.) I dismissed it at first but the more I thought about it the more pieces began to fall into place. After spending enough time with my friend and seeing how much time the phone can take up, I decided instead of doing a study on just BlackBerrys I would study Smartphones. I figured that my friend wasn't alone and lots of people spend time with these Smartphones for work and for personal life. Shouldn't these phones be a benefit to those who are crunched for time? Think about the people in your life. Do you know someone who spends time in the morning or at night on their Smartphone working from outside the office sending email or catching up? Or on the other hand that friend who spends 24/7 attached to their phone, emailing, texting, Facebooking? These are some of the questions that helped to start my thesis project, and now that I have got your attention please enjoy the rest of this thesis on how work Smartphones impact /life balance.

Smartphone

In order to have a clear understanding of this technology called Smartphone that I will be referring to in this study, here is provided a brief overview of what that technology is all about. Think back to your first cell phone, and if it's not that different than phones you can get today then go ask your parents about their first cell phone and perhaps you will discover the "brick

phone" a cell phone as large as a brick that people were happy to carry around as it afforded them the ability to go places and not miss calls. As technology has advanced it has brought us not only lighter and cheaper phones but also phones with more abilities, email, web surfing, calendars, texting, social networking, and on it goes. The newest wave of technology is what is known as the Smartphone. A quick web search provides us with a few definitions:

- CEVA, a company that licenses silicon intellectual property (SIP): *"A telephone that provides additional information accessing features. Any mobile telephone that combines voice services with e-mail, fax, pager or Internet access is called a smart phone" (CEVA, 2010).*
- Wikipedia*: "A smartphone is a mobile phone offering advanced capabilities, often with PC-like functionality (PC-mobile handset convergence)"* (Wikipedia, 2010).   They also do go on to say there is not an industry standard for these phones (Wikipedia, 2010).

Then there are the websites of those companies that sell Smartphones:

- BlackBerry describes their smartphone as a phone with email, instant messaging, built in camera, social networking capabilities, internet, GPS, maps, and more (BlackBerry, 2010).
- iPhone lists features: email, photos, maps, apps, voice recording, iTunes, etc. (Apple, 2010).

A useful definition for this thesis then is any phone that has the ability to easily surf the web, send and receive email, with additional optional features such as contacts, maps, GPS, and calendars.

Problem Discussion

Since not all of you will be convinced by my story as a legitimate reason for why I decided to choose this topic, the following section will provide academic support found in current research.

The article "Future Horizons for Work-Life Balance" states that work/life balance was an idea started in the 1960's (Hogarth & Bosworth, 2009) but the term was not officially used until 1986 in the USA (Word Spy - Work Life Balance, 2010). CioZone, a network for IT leadership, shows

us that the first Smartphone called the Simon was released to the public in 1992, but the first BlackBerry was not released until 2002 (Smartphone Evolution: From Simon to Pre in 12 Steps, 2009). Both of these concepts are fairly recent, which means that they are new to research and there are a lot of opportunities to study different aspects.

When doing the preliminary research for this topic it is easy to see how critical work/life balance is to people. Newspapers run articles, surveys are done, and multiple academic articles are written. "Over 180 academic articles have been published on work-family conflict using diverse samples from over a dozen countries (MacDermid, 2005)" (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009, p. 704). Saroj Parasuraman and Claire Simmers begin their article by saying "Balancing the dual demands and responsibilities of work and family roles has become an increasingly widespread problem experienced by employees and employers" (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001, p. 551). Emslie and Hunt talk about conflict and Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep open their article with "'Balance' between work and home lives is a much sought after but rarely claimed state of being" (Emslie & Hunt, 2009) (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). It quickly becomes apparent that people have a "problem" balancing work and life.

People have to bring work home, spend hours checking email if they are away from their desks during the day, can't keep up with happenings if they are on vacation, at the cost of projects being put on hold if they have valuable needed information, all this in an effort to just keep up with their jobs and perhaps succeed and get promoted. They get stressed out and so we can send a person to seminars to train them on how policy says they should be able to "balance" their work and life. Something that should be considered though is found in Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter's book *Rethinking Organizational Behaviour,* they write that we make decisions about everything based on our preferences and desires so no two people will decide or act in the same way (Jackson & Carter, 2007, pp. 267-290). So how can there be an "ideal" balance for everyone? Perhaps those training seminars are not as good as they first appear and maybe balance doesn't mean having equality.

Part of my study focuses on the area of work/life balance. Glen Kreiner, Elaine Hollensbe, and Mathew Sheep did an interview based qualitative study, the same type of study this thesis is based on, on work and home life and how people set and define boundaries to help them manage. They begin by stating that much of the research in this field has been previously focused on the

3

conflict perspective of work/life balance and then go on to argue that there is only so much we can learn from studying this conflict and that much of the research has been HR policy based (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). This is why they go on to study this work/life balance from an individual perspective through interviews. I too am not interested in studying the conflict of work and personal life from a policy standpoint and so find their research a good starting point for conducting my own.

In order to separate work from home life a person must put up boundaries, whether mental by deciding when 5pm hits they are done working and leave the office, or physical by leaving remaining work and email at work. More will be discussed on boundaries in the theory section but Jackson and Carter give us a warning "every instance of a boundary location has consequences" (Jackson & Carter, 2007, p. 209). This presents an interesting point. What if because of where we set our boundaries determines how good or bad or even if we have a work/life balance?

But what if balance does not have to be negative? Personally I hope to find through this study that having a Smartphone enhances this work and life balance. Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep provide further support for doing this study through their proposal for further research. "… though our focus has been on work-home conflict, we also anticipate that researchers would get a significant payoff by examining the role of work-family enrichment in our model. Some recent attention has turned to the potentially positive effects of intertwining work and home…" (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). This study will be taking a look at if work and personal life crossover, including what happens on work breaks and commutes.

Now what happens if we take people's work/life balance and rigid boundaries for work and home life they have already set up for themselves and then introduce technology that allows for easier work/life balance crossover? If we gave people the ability to check their email when they were away from their desks or on vacation? If we gave them what amounts to a mini PC that could keep them connected wherever they were?

Francine Schlosser borrows from Orlikowski and Iacono's research in her article and gives a key reason for why this sort of study I propose should be conducted; she writes that technology of

this kind is now part of our lifestyle but very limited research has been done on the impact it has on people (Schlosser, 2002).

Melissa Mazmanian, Wanda Orlikowski, and JoAnne Yates wrote a conference paper for the European Group for Organizational Studies, who publishes the journal *Organization Studies,* about wireless email devices, using the BlackBerry as their main device. In their paper they say:

 "As technologies become more portable and pervasive, the ability for individuals to stay connected expands into new settings and challenges taken-for-granted expectations of connectivity, responsiveness, and coordination. As a result, existing accounts do not help us understand how the environment of continual information flows is recurrently enacted through ongoing situated practices, nor do these accounts shed light on the likely consequences for individual and organizational life" (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2006, p. 2). So they are saying that this technology has not been studied in great detail, which is again where this study comes in to shed more light on the subject.

Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist, Kajsa Lindberg and Alexander Styhre also tell us about new technology and how there "is no 'one-size fits all' conceptualization of technology" but rather that the users adapt the technology to how they see fit (Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, & Styhre, 2009, p. 1149). This is interesting when you consider that in the majority of cases when handed a work Smartphone, the phone will come with detailed company policy instructions on how and when it should be used, possibly including items about hours that the phone must be on. Even in personal situations a phone may be bought for a specific reason such as texting but soon a user may find themselves checking email or using the calendar. People will use the phone in ways to make their lives easier. Perhaps then the Smartphone will not impact everyone's work/life balance in the same way.

Mazmanian, Orlikowski, and Yates propose topics that will become of importance in this thesis, that of boundaries, always being available, and the mix or separation of work and personal life:

> "The potential for this technology to tie people to extended relations in all aspects of
> their everyday lives. Individuals are seen to be forever "on call" to the demands of others
> as accessibility "anywhere, anytime" becomes played out as availability "everywhere, all
> the time" …Expectations of "always-availability" may "normalize the notion that

individuals should be available and accountable to others, visibly and transparently, at any time and place"… Cell phones are also seen to collapse distinctions between public and private spheres of life…this blurring as a "kind of spatial and temporal boundary rearrangement" …the use of cell phones encourages the embedding of "public" activities and responsibilities into private time and space (e.g., the home), as well as the integration of private commitments and relationships into the public sphere..." (Mazmanian, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2006, p. 4).

In essence the connected everywhere at all times is what a Smartphone is all about. It's to keep the user connected to the world at all times. Companies realized there was a market available and were eager to take advantage. As early as 1999 BlackBerry released a "phone" and email software for wireless internet, the device didn't even have cell phone capabilities (Mojave Media Group, 2009) (BBGeeks, 2008).

One of my interviewee's, Jeff, Manager of Store Operations, Facilities, and Energy, recalls their first Smartphone "But actually this goes back [to 2002], at first it was just a BlackBerry to communicate via email. And then they added the phone service to it as the technology developed. Because I used to have a cell phone and BlackBerry and they combined it into one piece of equipment".

Now of course technology is a lot more advanced and companies such as Apple and Google have joined the race alongside RIM (BlackBerry), Sony Erickson, and Nokia. Now the phones can do so much more: email, internet, social networks, texting, and of course they still make phone calls. Many of them contain lots of tools to help balance everything that goes on in your work and home life. For work there is email, calendars, address books, perhaps GPS if you travel a lot. For personal life there is social networking apps, texting, address books, apps that can do everything you could possibly think of; and then of course there are the websites that allow you to keep up to date with all of the latest and greatest updates in technology. The most commonly known are probably the Apple App Store and Crackberry.com.

So then we start analyzing this technology from a work/life perspective and start questioning the technology. The purpose of this study will be to gather people's opinions that own these Smartphones and try to understand how the phones have impacted their lives. We know that the

phones have the technology to help sort out both work and personal life. **So what does owning a Smartphone mean for work life and home life? Most importantly can this phone help people towards or assist with the balance they are so looking for or do the phones not impact this balance and just assist in the work life and home life realms separately?**

Method

This section is dedicated to the how and why of this research. It will include discussions on ontological assumptions, epistemological convictions, research methods, validity, data collection method, and a participant overview.

As was already discussed in the problem discussion section I am studying the organizational phenomenon of the impact of a Smartphone on a full time worker's work life balance. It is important to study this as this sort of technology is fairly recent and the more that it is studied the more information we can present those who own the phone or companies considering giving their employees these phones. This way they can know what to expect, review positive and negative aspects, and be informed.

Ontological Assumptions

According to the textbook *Business Research Methods* by Alan Bryman and Emma Bell people usually view the world and social phenomenon in one of two ways. The first view is as an objectivist, believing that social actors cannot influence social phenomenon and as a person you are subject to the strict rules and regulations of such phenomenon and can't change that (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 22). This is considered to be the classical view of the world. Constructionism is the other view of the world. This view holds that social actors can change, and are constantly changing the social phenomenon that surrounds us (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp. 22-25). In the textbook *The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory* Mary Jo Hatch and Dvora Yanow say that "Social realities… are constructed by the actors in those situations" (Hatch & Yanow, 2003, p. 69), meaning that the world around us is made up of the decisions that people make. Culture is a large social phenomenon which is being studied all the time. According to Bryman and Bell from a Constructionist viewpoint culture would be "in a constant state of construction and reconstruction" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 23). Constructionism would also then suggest that how

people parcel things in their lives (boundaries) to help them make sense is also subject to social constructions (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Most importantly Hatch and Yanow write "Interpretive organizational studies are increasingly found… in curricula. We maintain that interpretive science is a science" (Hatch & Yanow, 2003, p. 79).

The above views will then have an impact on how this thesis is researched and presented. I personally believe in Constructionism, that we as social actors can influence the systems and world and so will have a more interpretive view of the world. Firstly it has helped define the chosen topic. An objectivist perhaps would chalk the effects of these phones up to social culture, peer pressure, and the rules of a person's company position and no real studies need to be done. A constructionist would want to study the effects from the user's point of view and gather their reactions on how their lives have changed. Also as will be discussed more in a later section a qualitative study is used for interpreting where as a quantitative study is used for proving a fact. With a Constructionist viewpoint it would make more sense to study interpretively. The topic of this thesis revolves around technology, which is developing and changing rapidly. The ways in which people choose to use this technology and let it affect them is certainly a topic for a Constructionist view point. Both Bryman and Bell and Hatch and Yanow alluded to the fact that the world, social phenomenon, and culture are all open to change by people. With large technology changes, especially the Smartphone, being a rather recent social phenomenon many aspects of this culture are left unresearched. How people use these phones and how they impact their lives, especially from a work/life balance perspective is still open to research and understanding. Boundaries will be discussed in a later section of this thesis but Bryman and Bell say that the way people put up boundaries, where they put them, and why are also part of the social constructions of our world (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Finally Hatch and Yanow reveal that in the past interpretive studies were not overly accepted academic material but that is quickly changing, which means that my interpretations, if done properly, will be acceptable new material in the discourse (Hatch & Yanow, 2003).

 "In recent years, the term [Constructionism] has also come to include the notion that researchers' own account of the social world are constructions. In other words, the researcher always presents a specific version of social reality, rather than one that can be regarded as definitive; Knowledge is viewed as intermediate" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 23). One could argue

that this is important especially in the analysis section of this paper as it will be a construction of my interpretation which will be different from anyone else's possible interpretations. Not only that but combined with the fact that interpretive studies are now acceptable, my interpretation is now just as valid as someone else's. As for knowledge being intermediate, that brings up the next topic: epistemology.

Epistemological Considerations

Epistemology concerns what is acceptable knowledge. The argument is mainly focused on if the social world needs its own "scientific" way of study or if it can be studied in the same way as the natural sciences. The first viewpoint is that of a positivist nature. Studies must be objective, nothing outside of what can be known through the senses is acceptable, knowledge comes from facts, and theory should lead to hypotheses that are testable (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp. 16-17). Positivists take the view that social and natural sciences can be studied in the same way. Basically take all the ideas and social phenomenon in the world, funnel them down, test them, and deliver something boxed, a theory, fact, piece of knowledge, etc. Very strict and rigid without any consideration for the fact that the study of humans and our actions don't fit in boxes very well. The second viewpoint of interpretivism views the world in the opposite way, taking a boxed idea, opening it up to interpretation and understanding, and leading to more ideas that can further be opened up to study. This type of study allows human nature and actions to be studied and understood. It includes the subjects of hermeneutics, phenomenology, and the Verstehen method of Weber (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp. 17-19) (Hatch & Yanow, 2003). Thus knowledge is created through exploration and understanding and changes as we understand more. Bryman and Bell go on to say that humans are "fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences" (Bryman & Bell, 2007) alluding to the fact that we cannot study them in the same way as chemistry. Interpretivism is about the understanding of behaviors rather than the explanation, which means that researchers can happen upon surprise findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Hatch and Yanow agree with Bryman and Bell and add that "science needs to be able to address what is meaningful to people in the social situation under study. This requires understanding how groups, and individuals within them, develop, express, and communicate meaning, something that objective, unmediated observation… cannot yield" (Hatch & Yanow, 2003, p. 66).

Knowledge when studying humans cannot be done as one would study chemistry as has been already pointed out, and so the argument would be made for a qualitative study where understanding and interpretation are important. This means that in this thesis there will not be a presentation of facts and figures trying to explain exactly how much time is saved in work/life balance by having a Smartphone or figuring out the percentage of time spent on the phone doing work vs. personal life things. Instead the purpose will be to gather information, stories, opinions, thoughts, and feelings of how Smartphones have impacted my participant's lives. I aim for understanding not explanation. Instead of proposing ideas on how to solve work/life balance according to the classical policy view, this study tries to understand how people use a Smartphone to affect this balance. Secondly it will also broaden the amount of previous research that has been done that is available for use. Someone from a positivistic view point would only look at qualitative studies to gather more numbers for their paper; instead quantitative studies are now acceptable material. Finally if this thesis discovers something unexpected that will be ok, and in the eyes of social science perfectly acceptable new research to add to the discourse.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Study

Bryman and Bell share with us a definition of qualitative vs. quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 28).

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Role of theory	Test theory	Create new theory
Ontological	Positivistic	Interpretivistic
Epistemological	Objectivism	Constructionism

As shared already in the above two sections the focus of this research falls in the interpretivistic and constructionist sides of the scale, leading this study towards qualitative research. Furthermore as already explained exploring and understanding people and their relationships to their Smartphones and how this effects their work/life balance is important rather than just to prove or disprove something. This type of explanation and understanding will help to create new theories thus completing the last suggestion for qualitative research.

Validity

There are several factors that should be taken into consideration: Firstly, credibility which is established by conducting the research according to the methods of good practice and also submitting to those who were studied a copy of the study to make sure that what they said and what the researcher heard and interpreted are the same (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 411). In my case I have followed the methods of good practice by conducting research in an honest and ethical way, and also asked follow up questions and clarified with participants during interviews to make sure my interpretations were correct. Secondly transferability lends acceptability to a qualitative study. It is understood that qualitative research usually looks at a specific instance or social phenomenon and so it would seem that the research can't be generalized to a larger population. However, if good descriptions of the details are given then other researchers can decide if the previously researched material is applicable to their own research (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 414). I have provided a description of how the research was gathered and a lengthy description of my results so someone can determine if my study is applicable to their own. The third criterion is confirmablity, or that of keeping personal value or inclinations out of the research as much as possible, though Bryman and Bell do go on to say that this part is usually done by auditors of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 414). This is a tricky part of the validity for the introduction of this study is a personal story and personal choices for ontology and epistemology and the analysis are all personal interpretations. However, the analysis is based on reported results and combined with researched theory, and the personal story is included for good reason; additionally this study has been reviewed several times by peers and my advisor. Last is dependability, which is that researchers should adopt an auditing approach where every detail of research is available for inspection should it be necessary (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 414). In this case I have copies of every version of this manuscript and both transcriptions and voice recordings of my participant interviews.

To have a valid study extra care should be taken when preparing the methods and doing the analysis so as to prove acceptable credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmablity as the entire research project and results are more open to interpretation.

Data Collection Method

For my data collection there were two sets of data that were collected. The first set is theoretical data and the second set empirical.

The theoretical data was collected from a variety of sources including articles, web pages, and textbooks. Knowing that the internet does not provide data that is always reliable this information was used to help set up the topic of discussion in the introduction not to provide theories upon which research would be based. In order to have reliable data, textbooks and articles were used. The articles were mostly gathered from the Electronic Library Information Navigator (ELIN) database or EBSCOhost database, limiting searches to those articles which are peer reviewed.

Phone Interviews

For this study interviews, specifically phone interviews, were chosen as the way to gather the empirical material. Bryman and Bell state that "the aim is for the interviewer to elicit from the interviewee… all matter of information" (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 209). Since I am doing a qualitative survey collecting "all matter of information" seems like a good way to go as what people say before or after the actual official interview may be more insightful to how they really feel about their Smartphones than the scripted possibly less embarrassing answers given during the actual interview.

Doing phone interviews vs. an actual face to face interview has been questioned by researchers in the past as to whether it provides the same type of data or not. Judith Sturges and Kathleen Harahan do a comparison of face to face vs. phone interviews. They say that "Qualitative researchers generally rely on face-to-face interviewing when conducting semi-structured and in-depth interviews. Conducting an interview by telephone typically is seen as appropriate only for short (Harvey, 1988), structured interviews (Fontana and Frey, 1994) or in very specific situations (Rubin and Rubin, 1995)" (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004, p. 108). Since my study makes use of short interviews, 20-30 minutes, and they are mostly structured, this type of interviewing would then be acceptable for me. Sturges and Harahan go on to suggest further situations in which phone interviews are appropriate: when discussing sensitive topics, access to hard to reach groups, and cost (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). For this study when discussing work/life balance

and use of cell phones it could potentially be a sensitive topic to the respondent if they feel embarrassed that their responses paint them in a negative light. Also being in Sweden these respondents to me were impossible to reach face to face, or without the cost of a plane ticket back to the USA. Finally the purpose of this study is to look at people who have Smartphones, which in the end is still a phone, so to call them versus emailing or chatting with them also is a reason my data collection is valid. For these reasons doing phone interviews for this study is acceptable.

Participant Overview

The participants chosen range in age from 23-52, both male and female. They hold a variety of jobs including teacher/principle, IT consultant, managers, investigator, sales man, Meadery owner and intern. The type of phone they have/had is not important as long as it has/had access to email, internet, and texting capabilities.

For this study the participants chosen were chosen for several reasons. They were firstly chosen for their use of a Smartphone either currently or in the past, as this is the subject of this thesis and to not have access makes them an invalid candidate for study. The second criterion for selection was a full time job, as they have the regular schedule that will allow them to possibly have a work/life balance. Students or those with part time jobs were not chosen as the line between work and personal life flexes day to day as they go about their studies. The third criterion for selection was quite simply access. I was able to get a hold of all of these people for an interview and get them to talk to me.

Theory

This section will discuss the main concept of work life balance as well as research on technology and how it affects work/life balance.

Work/Life Balance

This section will give the basic definition of what work life balance is and then discuss it from two perspectives: freedom and boundaries.

Definition

The concept in this thesis that is critical to understand is the concept of work/life balance. Work/life balance also researched as work–home conflict, work–family conflict, and also work–life balance is a widely researched topic (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). With just a simple search via Google on "Work Life Balance" we are returned 48 million hits, which would tell us that this is something most people will run across, or have to deal with at some time in their lives. The first result that pops up is Wikipedia who provides us with a definition, history, and current issues. The next few hits tell us a bit more about how important this topic is: Work Life Balance: Training, Work-life balance: Ways to restore harmony and reduce stress, 5 Tips for Better Work-Life Balance, Employers and Work-Life Balance, and on it goes (Google). This makes it fairly obvious that work/life balance is an issue and people are seeking ways to find or maintain this balance. Let us then find some definitions of work/life balance so there is a common understanding.

- *"Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society … (Employers for Work Life Balance 2006, cited in Fleetwood, 2007a: 351)"* (Kesting & Harris, 2009, p. 47).
- Worklifebalance.com: *"Meaningful daily Achievement and Enjoyment in each of my four life quadrants: Work, Family, Friends and Self"* (Bird, 2003).
- Carol Emslie and Kate Hunt borrow from S.C Clarks' study and say: *"'work–life balance' (defined as 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict' by Clark 2000 p. 751)"* (Emslie & Hunt, 2009, pp. 151-152).

These definitions show us that both work and home life are important to people.

Work/Life Balance and Boundaries

Glen Kreiner, Elaine Hollensbe, and Mathew Sheep's work revolves around boundary theory which is "the ways in which people create, maintain, or change boundaries in order to simplify and classify the world around them (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000)" (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009, p. 705). Basically they are saying that people divide the world into categories so

14

that they can manage the information around them. Since boundary theory has been used in many different fields including both social and scientific it is a valid concept for my social study. According to their research boundaries define areas of our lives from work to home, and they can be rigid boundaries that we do not like to change or thinner boundaries that are open to the influence of others (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). This means that people will without thinking set up boundaries for their work life and for their personal life. As mentioned before Jackson and Carter also tell us about boundaries. They support Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep's theory of changeable boundaries but also warn us that the setting of boundaries can have consequences (Jackson & Carter, 2007).

One other significant section of Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep's research taken from Nippert-Eng's work on boundaries is how people differentiate their boundaries. There are two types of people, "segmenters" and "integrators". The segmenters are those that keep their work and home life separate by having two sets of things one for each segment, e.g. two sets of keys, two calendars, two PC's and they do not like to mix the two. The other type of person the integrator is the person that combines the two lives, they have mixed keys, work friends as personal friends, etc (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). This will become of significant importance as the interviewees of this study share how they keep or combine personal life and work life, and if they use their Smartphones to do so.

Finally Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep bring up a point which ties directly into my study. They say that "On the one hand, being constantly available to both work and family through technology can breed work-home conflict and boundary violations (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007); on the other hand, technology can facilitate desired integration and work-home balance (Valcour & Hunter, 2005)" (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009, p. 715). Meaning that technology has the ability to both help and harm work/life balance.

Work/Life Balance and Freedom

Stefan Kesting and Candice Harris write about work/life balance and how freedom to choose is important in attaining a balance. Kesting and Harris are against the traditional definition of work/life balance found in a work by Felstdea, Jewson, Phizacklea, and Walter: "In short, work-life balance practices are those which, intentionally or not, increase the flexibility and autonomy

of the worker in negotiating attention and presence in employment (ibid. 56)" (Kesting & Harris, 2009, p. 48). Kesting and Harris would say that this definition suits employers so that they can get the most out of their employees but leaves little room for the freedom of the employee to choose what is the best balance for themselves (Kesting & Harris, 2009). They would go on to call this freedom "capability" and define it as a choice a person makes as to which type of life they want to lead that makes them happy. They say that work/life balance and well being is not about good and bad but about having the capability and freedom to choose and balance as you see fit (Kesting & Harris, 2009).

Jackson and Carter also have something to say about freedom and decision making. They say that decisions are just manifestations of our desires and so two people in the same situation will make different decisions (Jackson & Carter, 2007, p. 273) this will show itself in the ways that my participants choose to use their phones. This is why the traditional definition of work/life balance practices won't necessarily work for two people because they don't want the same thing. One person sees and uses work/life balance one way and another person would say that person number one has no balance.

Technology

As the theme of this paper revolves not only around work/life balance but also around technology it is important to discuss what technology can do for a person's life.

Handheld Devices

Francine Schlosser in her article about how people use handheld devices tries to determine what sort of impact these devices have on people. In her research Schlosser introduces the term symbolic interaction or people deciding which things have meaning and adjusting this meaning according to situations (Schlosser, 2002), which is considered to be a constructionist viewpoint, which fits perfectly with the style of research that is done by this thesis. This symbolic interaction covers research done by Erving Goffman and Van Maanen, both found in Scholosser, who argues that people use these devices as a tool to manage impressions and to be more cynical. The devices will be used to protect their image and how people want others to view themselves (Schlosser, 2002). This sounds a lot like people managing their Facebook and other social network accounts, only letting people see what they want them to see.

Schlosser makes mention in her findings of ways people use these devices from managing communication via email, using the phone constantly while driving, holding meetings in meetings, and working during a commute. Prus in Schlosser gives us a key point about self and technology. "In order to promote self-image, people develop proficiencies in using technologies, and learn to manage both relational and isolated aspects of self (Prus, 1997)" (Schlosser, 2002, p. 420). This can be directly tied back to the personal life aspect of work/life balance; people are learning these technologies to help balance that side of their lives.

Relational self is another term discussed by Schlosser, that of desiring and being open to affiliation (Schlosser, 2002). She discusses how through these devices users can have access directly to other people and bring them into a closer relationship. It is through this desire to be connected to others that make it "necessary for people to make decisions as to the terms of their relationships and the technology mediating them" (Schlosser, 2002).

Schlosser also brings us the term integrated self, regarding the being online/on call 24/7. She finds that her participants found their boundaries slipping between work and home. She also recounts then that those participants started to regulate their communication and set limits, which relates back to Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep's work on boundaries. Finally she brings up the topic of addiction and getting hooked on the device. She writes "the device, designed to be worn continuously on an individual's body, constitutes an open medium of communication, and it may begin to set conditions on the user's life" (Schlosser, 2002, p. 436).

Finally Schlosser makes mention of the isolated self, that when a user does not have their technology they feel without (Schlosser, 2002). This is an interesting idea which will be discussed in a later section. Can there be a balance if you always need to have the technology?

New Technology

Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist, Kajsa Lindberg, and Alexander Styhre bring us a discussion of new technology on professionals. "…technology is always in the hands of people whose ingenuity and ability to adapt technological artifacts to individual needs and demands make technology a fluid and malleable social and cultural resource (Oudshoorn & Pinch, 2003; Yates, 2006). Such a perspective also admits that the negotiated or enacted use of technology often differs from the prescribed, mechanical operation of technology (Orlikowski, 1996)" (Eriksson-Zetterquist,

Lindberg, & Styhre, 2009, p. 1146). This will be discussed in more detail later on but is what has happened with use of Smartphones for work, people start using them for personal life, or find uses for the applications on them for other areas of their work lives than was originally intended. With the increase in capacity of Smartphones over the last couple of years people now do things with technology they never did before or they use it in new ways. Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, and Styhre say that new technology is "socially constructed by actors through the different meanings they attach to it and the various features they emphasize and use" (Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, & Styhre, 2009, p. 1148). This means that not everyone will use their devices in the same way which will of course impact their work/life balance.

Results

This section will be discussing the results of this study gathered from interviews with the participants. Even during the interview process themes began to emerge with similarities and differences between participants use of the phones.

Reason for Owning a Smartphone

The participants either received phones for work, and also have a personal Smartphone or they just have the personal phone. Work phones were given to those whose company deemed them to be at an appropriate level of the company, mostly wanting them to use the phones for 24/7 availability. On the other hand participants revealed many slightly different reasons for owning a personal phone. Four participants from an intern to a self owned IT company owner revealed that they like their phones to check email be it work or personal. Two participants wanted the phone for ease of texting others. Many revealed that they cannot live without the GPS, calendar, and address book functions, to keep them from getting lost, keep track of their lives, and have all of the people they need to contact at the tips of their fingers. It has quickly become obvious that communication and organization are key factors for most people in choosing this type of phone.

Work Features

When asked about their favorite and most useful work related feature of their phone here is how they responded:

Andrew, the owner of his own IT consulting company, says*: "The ability to receive and respond to all my email from anywhere, cause I'm very rarely at home or sitting in front of my desk that I have internet access so no matter where I am I can always respond to important emails."*

Heath, a sales representative for Long Island Meadery, reveals: *"Having my email sent to my phone faster than it makes it on the internet."*

Paul, owner of Long Island Meadery, says: *"Well for the Meadery itself the address book would be the most functional, next would be the date book and contacts."*

Other participants also liked the email in addition to the texting feature, the ability to be reached by phone whenever necessary, and the contacts. But not everything was all positive; one participant reveals his love/hate relationship with the phone.

Bill, a criminal investigator, tells why he didn't like his phone: *"My number one issue with it [his Smartphone] was the email, the email that we had just didn't seem to work right with the BlackBerry World Edition as it did with a computer, there were issues with attachments not coming through or emails getting chopped up and I'm not sure if that was the BlackBerry or the network but it just didn't seem to, it seemed more of a hassle to use it for work and for email than it was to just go on your computer and check your email from there."*

Personal Features

Since this is a study to see how Smartphones affect work and personal life, participants were also asked to speak about their favorite feature that impacted their personal lives.

With constant communication available and many people in the USA having access to cell phones the results were not too surprising. Six of nine participants liked the texting or BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) features of their phones so they could be in contact with people all the time. One participant liked to do research and keep himself entertained, while another liked using the Google Maps feature when driving.

Andrew says: *"The majority of my good friends are very very busy between family and jobs of their own and I actually don't' get to talk to or see the majority of my friends the majority of the time, so I talk to them by text messages or email so it allows me to always keep in touch with people in my personal life who if I didn't have it I may talk to a person every six months or once a year."*

Kris, a manager in healthcare: *"It's the BBM, it's just a lot easier than texting cause you can see the streaming the conversation as its happening."*

Those who spoke about texting and emailing revealed similar things to what Andrew said. It allows them to keep in contact with people they might not otherwise be able to; and the sending of a simple text message allows them to keep their relationship alive.

Smartphones Affecting Work

Participants were asked to describe what impact these new phones have had on their working lives. One participant revealed not much had changed as her job required more paper than electronics, but for others a variety of effects came out.

Heath says: *"Makes it easier because I can get things done faster, and make more calls, look up contacts while on the phone, send email while on the phone, communicate with multiple people all at once."*

Toni, a global manager for Johnson & Johnson reveals several reasons: *"When I'm not at my computer if I'm in a meeting or at a conference I can still stay connected to urgent emails. So for me when the system is down I can be aware of that and get people to act upon it."* And *"It really makes my telecommuting much easier… If I'm train commuting I answer my email … but if I'm in a car sometimes it's for conference calls while I'm driving."*

Andrew tells*: "I could not run my personal business what so ever I would not have the opportunity without it."*

Jeff says: *"It always just made you more in contact, more aware of what was going on you weren't completely out of the loop on weekends or when you were out of town especially; you didn't have to get back to your PC."*

Participants were also asked if having a Smartphone had changed their working lives. Two participants work lives have not changed simply because their position and the phone don't impact each other much. Andrew, as mentioned above could not run his business without it. Toni can catch up on email during the day and has less to do at the end of the day. Heath and Paul use their phones to promote the Meadery which they could not do before. Bill hated his phone and didn't like to work from it and Kris didn't let the phone affect her work because she didn't feel the need to let it.

Smartphones Affecting Personal Lives

The effect a Smartphone has on personal life is quite different than that it has on work. For work life participants found that having a Smartphone was beneficial, and while they also found it beneficial in personal life not everything was positive.

Andrew, Bill, Paul, and Toni reveal that by using their phones for texting and having the ability to become more active on social networks such as Facebook has had positive impacts. They are able to keep in contact with more people they wouldn't have been able to otherwise, they are also able to be more aware of their friends lives and then don't feel left out.

On the other side participants revealed some of the negative effects of these phones:

Örs, an intern in Stockholm, Sweden puts it quite bluntly: *"I'll share that instinctively if you don't mind. It's f***ed it up a bit because I'm online so often that I get kind of pissed when people don't write me because they aren't online as much as I am so it's bad."*

Heath says: *"Good qualities: anyone can get in touch with me, bad: sometimes it's quite annoying."*

Kirsten, a teacher/principal says: *"I think I play with it a whole lot more since there are so many apps on it and I make a conscious effort not to be pulling it out around people or to be constantly checking it…. But I do have to make a conscious effort to not be rude."*

Jeff reveals: *"Well it did have an impact on personal life because it took up your time when you were on personal time, off supposedly, you ended up staying in contact or working or you were contacted… your time off became less your time off…"*

Jeff also brings up an interesting point about being in and out of contact: *"You never want to have a phone in a crisis cause then you have to deal with it… if you didn't have the phone it's not a crisis cause you're not involved…it's not a crisis when someone else is dealing with it… it might be when you get back but while you are out of contact it's not a crisis."*

Participants were also asked about having notifications for Facebook sent to their phones. Every time someone does something to your profile, or to something you have commented on, or games you are involved in, Facebook can send you a notification if you let it. I was interested in what people would have to say in regards to this as a person has a potential to receive many notifications during the day. Kirsten, a grade school principal, Toni, Andrew, Bill and Kris, all responded in the same way. They only have notifications for special people or very important events as they feel to have notifications set up otherwise is annoying, distracting, and too much unnecessary information.

Participants were asked if their lives had changed with this new Smartphone, the majority response was they use it to contact more people, more often, in more ways, and keep in contact with people they may not have before.

Work/Life Balance

Participants were asked several questions dealing with different issues of work/life balance and having this Smartphone. I had thought that with as much use as the phones get for personal life that work life would get the same amount of time; surprisingly my participants revealed otherwise with one even saying that personal life invades work life.

Some participants like to use their work commutes to do both personal and work related things and some take the opportunities of a work break to check personal email. Paul says it give him time to hang out with his son on spur of the moment events, and also keep better track of events for the Meadery using the calendar feature of his phone.

Kris likes to keep balance*: "I guess I've chosen not to let it affect my life outside of work because I don't feel the need to, I don't want to let it interfere, I don't want to be checking my email for work all the time all weekend."*

22

Toni also likes to have boundaries: *"I'm very good about keeping work and home separate, and I put my BlackBerry away when work is done… when I first got the BlackBerry I had the option of getting all my personal email on to it and making it my primary phone for both work and personal… And I defiantly chose not to do that, I like them separate."*

Bill says: *"I try to keep the work phone and the email from work separate, when I'm working I'm working, when I'm not I'm trying to just totally forget about it."*

Jeff speaks about ruling the phone: *"If you let the phone rule your life… that's probably not healthy, if you manage the phone rather than the phone managing you, you can actually have a balance. You can decide what to deal with and what to not deal with and that is completely up to you."*

Andrew reveals that his phone has actually given him a reprieve from work and an attempt at a personal life: *"Now I can keep in contact with people, I can make arrangements with people, making plans for the movies... It's given me an access to a personal life or an attempt at on."*

Participants were asked about having the ability to see what emails are coming in and being able to decide if they wanted to react to them or not. Many of them said that was a positive feature, as they could either absorb the information that was being sent without having to respond, or deeming that the email was not as important as what they were currently doing.

The participants were also asked what they thought about always being able to be reached 24/7. Bill reveals both a positive and negative aspect of these Smartphones. He says its peace of mind knowing he's always reachable in an emergency but on the other hand gets annoyed if someone doesn't respond quickly enough to a communication. Jeff has already mentioned you get dragged into things you wouldn't otherwise if you didn't have this connection. Örs and Toni don't think anything of it as it's a way of life. Heath and Kris mentioned turning their phones off while they sleep as that is more important than what people have to communicate with them about. Andrew says that finding balance and learning when to answer and when to just leave it is important for him. Paul likes the phone for emergencies and keeping up with his son but says it's bad if you just want to relax and it keeps going off.

23

Finally participants were asked about losing their phones and how they would feel from a connectivity standpoint if it was gone.

> Toni says: *"More annoying than anything cause you're just so used to having it with you, I would say the biggest thing for me if I lost it and I had to go somewhere I would not feel safe as I couldn't call anyone and I would probably get lost as I rely on my navigator a lot."*

> Andrew says: *"There have been the occasional time I left my phone at home and forgot it and you feel completely naked and cut off from the world to the point where you almost have a panic attack. I have gotten accustom to being able to let myself relax and chill a little so that if I forgot my phone I don't lose my mind but you feel cut off from the world like someone locked you in a room."*

> Jeff, after his departure from his old company, reveals: *"I was out of contact, I mean what happened is that people I would have normally been in contact with… as a result of losing the phone, people I would normally have contact with I was not in contact with in this case it was a long term loss so I just didn't talk to those people as much…"*

> Heath says that it's not so much an issue on his end but with others: *"Because I deal with a lot of businesses and networks, I'm a network center for tons of things that go on, if I don't have a phone people panic."*

> Kris reveals: *"It would bother me if I lost it just because it's like if I accidently leave my phone at home for some reason, even if it's just going to like the grocery store and coming home, I just feel kind of like lost almost."*

Several more participants made mention that they keep back up phones just in case something like this were to happen so that they could be back online quickly.

Additional Research

Participants were asked to sum up the phone and phone experience in a few words. The results fit the ways people talk about their phones both positive and negative.

- Beneficial
- Convenient and addicting
- A second brain
- Having the world in the palm of your hand
- A useful tool but an intrusion
- Empowering
- Can't live without it, essential, mission critical

Throughout the course of the interviews several participants used the word addicting to speak about the phone and all of the features that can be used and all of the things you can do with the phone.

Additional comments by the participants reveal a few more important things. Toni is surprised by the fact that although she has not been using this technology for an overly long time she feels quite technologically advanced and now wants to have the latest and greatest. Bill speaks of the phone being a burden for Heath, as he notices that when Heath makes a choice to ignore or leave communication for later some of his contacts harass him via the phone. Jeff wanted to make a final point again about managing the phone and what it can do instead of letting it manage you and your time. Heath likes to have the phone because it keeps him connected to the entire world and can be tuned into anything he wants plus it's just convenient to have.

Analysis

In this section you will find a culmination of ideas taken from the theory section and results section of this thesis.

When we start looking at participants' reasons for owning a phone, their favorite work features, and their favorite personal features, we find that most of the reasons revolve around communication. Schlosser spoke of the relational self and wanting to be attached to others,

which is demonstrated by participants in their favorite features such as texting, BBM, or even the ability to be notified of Facebook events. Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, and Styhre's work on users and new technology (Eriksson-Zetterquist, Lindberg, & Styhre, 2009) is also demonstrated by our participants. These Smartphones were not intended to be a marketing tool nor the lifeblood of a company. Yet Paul, Heath, and Andrew use them to promote their companies and in Andrew's case to even just have the ability to run his company.

So let's revisit the first section of our research question: **So what does owning a Smartphone mean for work life and home life?**

For the working life of my participants it meant getting work done faster and multitasking, being in constant contact for emergencies, and continuously aware of what was going on.

For personal life it means being more active on Facebook and social networks, and having the ability to contact anyone, any time any place, but it also meant getting frustrated when people don't' answer fast enough, being annoyed by constant communication, and having work taking up personal time simply because others could reach you.

This research collaborates with what Scholosser said about people managing impressions of themselves (Schlosser, 2002), they can update their Facebook statuses and express themselves to friends constantly; and again it agrees with the relational management of the self (Schlosser, 2002). It's about being more connected all the time, even though that does have some consequences.

But the bigger question to be explored is that of: **Most importantly can this phone help people towards or assist with the balance they are so looking for or do the phones not impact this balance and just assist in the work life and home life realms separately?**

From the responses of the participants boundary has become an important issue to them. Many of the participants expressed the idea that when work is over work is over and regardless of technology or not they are done. One participant even remarked that her work phone mostly stays on the counter uncharged unless she knows she will need it; which according to Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep's research sounds like a rigid boundary these participants have decided to set up (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). They know that when work is over work is over and

don't seem overly upset to leave it behind, so that when something comes up outside of work hours it's a big deal. The technology has not overly affected their work spilling into their personal lives. It would appear that many of the participants fall into the category of segmenters where they like to keep work and home separate. Toni told us she had the option to combine work and personal email on her work phone and did not want to do that. Thus many participants find their work/life balance by simply putting work away.

There were on the other hand participants whose jobs spilled into all hours of the day, participants like Andrew and Heath whose phones are critical for them to do their jobs. This means that work and personal life are intertwined making them integrators. Interestingly enough neither seemed overly upset about this crossover, Andrew gets to run his business and Heath gets to promote the Meadery to a wide range of people.

Jackson and Carter spoke of consequences of setting boundaries (Jackson & Carter, 2007) and from the above descriptions it almost seems that setting any kind of boundaries to try and have a balance just creates stress as it makes anything outside of normal hours a hassle. Heath remarked on getting harassed if he tries to ignore his phone but on the other hand Jeff touched on it when he talked about a crisis not being a crisis if they can't reach you. So if one sets boundaries and turns the technology off and something goes wrong it's not stressful because you don't know about it; so the consequences are good. Participants are aware of the consequences their decisions make and yet they still choose to make them in an effort to find the work/life balance. They are doing what is best for them, and as mentioned before not every person will make the same decisions (Jackson & Carter, 2007).

The participants expressed positive things about being able to check email and just let them go, to absorb the information and then make the decision to not do anything about it. This relates back to the idea of freedom and capabilities presented by Kesting and Harris (Kesting & Harris, 2009). All the participants via the Smartphones have been given the freedom to deal with email as they see fit and in the manner they see fit, rather than stressing out about an urgent missed email when away from their desk they can now handle every situation as it comes up. Participants are able to assert a measure of control over the technology and over the communications in their lives.

27

Decisions are also made about the integrated self (Schlosser, 2002), and while it seems that people pretty much have the no work during personal life hours figured out what about the other way around? Participants expressed using their phones on commutes to and from work for both personal and work related items. A few also expressed using their phones for personal related items during work breaks. People are choosing which way they want the balance to fall, to have work/life balance does not mean things have to be equal but it's about what works well for you.

> Toni says: *"If anything my personal overlaps work rather than work overlapping personal which I would say is good from a personal perspective."*

Schlosser tells us, with the concepts of integrated and isolated selves, quite frankly that the wearing of these devices 24/7 can start to set rules for a person's life (Schlosser, 2002). My participants would agree with that but they would regard it as negative. Kris doesn't like to have her phone in her purse when she drives but visible on her lap. Heath gets harassed by people if he does not answer his phone right away, Bill and Örs expressed frustration with people when they don't answer fast enough. Several participants also made specific mention of shutting their phones off when they sleep to avoid the annoyance of having to worry about it 24/7.

Which bring us to the work/life balance issue. If it is so easy to turn off work why can't people turn off personal life? One participant expressed having to learn to ignore the phone. When asked what would happen when the phone is lost interesting things began to emerge. One participant admitted it would be an annoyance to not have it. One expressed the feeling of panic, of being naked or being locked in a room. One said that people panic when they don't answer. One feels lost without it.

Before this project started I would have said that Smartphones because of the great technology that they are have a huge impact on work/life balance in general. So to answer the question about Smartphones helping with the overall picture of work/life balance I would say that Smartphones have some impact but not a great deal in the work/life crossover. Negatively work invades personal life, but no more negatively than having a regular cell phone and a laptop. Positively these phones help people stay organized and deal with email. People already have a set routine and have predetermined this work balance regardless of technology. On the other hand the life/work balance is more directly affected by the phone. Positively Smartphones break personal

28

life into work allowing people to deal with personal life on work breaks or commutes as well as keeping more of a social life, and in some cases just achieve a social life. Negatively however the connectivity creates some problems with too much information or too much communication. It would seem the Smartphones are more of an asset when used in the work and personal life realms separately.

If we go back to the definitions of work/life balance used in this thesis, we don't find them talking about conflict. Nor do we find the traditional idea of balance, that things should be equal. What we do find is the definitions telling us that work/life balance is about control, about achievement and enjoyment, and about satisfaction (Kesting & Harris, 2009) (Bird, 2003) (Emslie & Hunt, 2009). Work/life balance doesn't have to mean equality between both sectors. The participants have spoken about the learned control over work and the learned/in the process of learning control over their personal phones.

I think Jeff said it best: "If you let the phone rule your life… that's probably not healthy, if you manage the phone rather than the phone managing you, you can actually have a balance. You can decide what to deal with and what to not deal with and that is completely up to you."

My participants know there are some issues of control to work out when having these phones but they are small when compared to all of the positive things done by these phones for the participants. After an interesting study and some revelations about work/life balance and technology with unexpected results and so called personal balance being negative we must keep in mind; work/life balance and well being is about freedom to choose, what works for one person won't necessarily work for another, and there are many different definitions of work/life balance (Jackson & Carter, 2007) (Kesting & Harris, 2009). It seems that despite the negatives the participants are happy with the balance they have and as we defined work life balance in the beginning it's not about being equal it's about what works for you.

Future Research

After doing this research there are several areas that could be considered for future research. The main topic for future research is that of participants and the type of job that they hold. Most of my participants worked in jobs where their phone was not absolutely critical to their job so it would be interesting to see if the results would vary if research was done on those who have phones which are critical to their jobs e.g. helpdesk IT staff, traveling sales people, stock brokers, perhaps even realtors. Most of my participants also like having the technology so research could also be conducted on those who do not like the technology and connectivity offered today but were given this technology due to their jobs.

Works Cited

Apple. (2010). *Apple iPhone*. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from
http://www.apple.com/iphone/iphone-3gs/

BBGeeks. (2008, April 15). *The history of the BlackBerry*. Retrieved April 26, 2010, from
http://www.bbgeeks.com/blackberry-guides/the-history-of-the-blackberry-88296/

Bird, J. (2003). *Work-Life Balance Defined - What it really means!* Retrieved April 24, 2010,
from Worklifebalance.com: http://www.worklifebalance.com/worklifebalancedefined.html

BlackBerry. (2010). *What is BlackBerry*. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from
http://na.blackberry.com/eng/ataglance/blackberry.jsp#tab_tab_devices

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2007). *Business Research Methods.* Oxford: Oxford UP.

CEVA. (2010). *Glossary of Terms*. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from http://ceva-
dsp.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=glossary

Emslie, C., & Hunt, K. (2009). 'Live to Work' or 'Work to Live'? A Qualitative Study of Gender
and Work–life Balance among Men and Women in Mid-life. *Gender, Work and Organization* ,
151-172.

Eriksson-Zetterquist, U., Lindberg, K., & Styhre, A. (2009). When the good times are over:
Professionals encountering new technology. *Human Relations* , 1145-1170.

Google. (n.d.). *Google Search*. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from Google :
http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&q=work+life+balance&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=&gs_rfai=

Hatch, M. J., & Yanow, D. (2003). Organization Theory as an Interpretive Science. In *The
Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory: Meta-Theoretical Perspectives* (pp. 63-86). Oxford
University Press.

Hogarth, T., & Bosworth, D. (2009, January). *Future Horizons for Work-life Balance.* Retrieved
May 25, 2010, from Beyond Current Horizons: http://www.beyondcurrenthorizons.org.uk/future-
horizons-for-work-life-balance/

Jackson, N., & Carter, P. (2007). *Rethinking Organizational Behaviour: A Poststructuralist Framework.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Kesting, S., & Harris, C. (2009). Providing a Theoretical Foundation for Work-Life Balance – Sen's Capability Approach. *New Zealand Journal of Employment Relations* , 47-61.

Kreiner, G., Hollensbe, E. C., & Sheep, M. L. (2009). Balancing Borders and Bridges: Negotiating the Work-Home Interface via Boundary Work Tactics. *Academy of Management Journal* , 704-730.

Mazmanian, M., Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2006). CrackBerrys: Exploring the Social Implications of Ubiquitous Wireless Email Devices. *EGOS 2006 Sub-theme 14. Technology, Organization and Society: Recursive Perspectives.*

Mojave Media Group. (2009, October 14). *A Brief History of the BlackBerry*. Retrieved April 26, 2010, from http://www.brighthub.com/office/collaboration/articles/8041.aspx

Parasuraman, S., & Simmers, C. A. (2001). Type of employment, work-family conflict and well-being: a comparative study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior* , 551-568.

Schlosser, F. K. (2002). So, how do people really use thier handheld devices? An interactive study of wireless technology use. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* , 401-423.

Smartphone Evolution: From Simon to Pre in 12 Steps. (2009, July 19). Retrieved May 25, 2010, from CioZone: http://www.ciozone.com/index.php/Mobile-and-Wireless/Smartphone-Evolution-From-Simon-to-Pre-in-12-Steps/1.html

Sturges, J. E., & Hanrahan, K. J. (2004). Comparing telephone and face-to-face . *Qualitative Research* , 107-118.

Wikipedia. (2010, April 23). *Smartphone*. Retrieved April 24, 2010, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smartphone

Word Spy - Work Life Balance. (2010). Retrieved May 25, 2010, from Word Spy: http://www.wordspy.com/words/work-lifebalance.asp

Interviews

Arndt, K. (2010, April 18). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

Blénessy , Ö. (2010, April 15). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

Bomber, J. (2010, April 18). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

David, H. (2010, April 27). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

Gullerud, K. (2010, April 17). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

Holm, P. (2010, April 19). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

McGovern, T. (2010, April 16). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

McLeod, A. (2010, April 21). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)

Smith, W. (2010, April 20). (K. Bomber, Interviewer)