

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/in-brief/the-golden-age-of-remote-collaboration/>

Almost any kind of business, advises Digits co-founder Jeff Seibert, can succeed at doing most of its work remotely — even in hardware and biotech. Remote collaboration tools like video sharing, he adds, are poised to explode, and become a huge driver for new companies and ideas.



Transcript

- I want to go back to talking about working remotely.. 00:00:08,560 I'm curious, can all companies do this? What would be the limitations? You happen to be a very software focused business that, you know, people have been, had a lot of experience working remotely in different industries, - Yep.. 00:00:23,070 - What about, what can't be done this way? 00:00:25,490 And what can that might be surprising? - Yeah, it's a great question.. 00:00:30,120 And it is, it is fortunate, honestly, to just be doing pure software, that does make things easier, but I'd say even other shape of businesses, even hardware businesses, you can do a lot remotely.. And so, first to answer your question, the tougher ones are, if you're building hardware, it is difficult to have to share a physical prototype virtually.. And so that is tough.. If you're doing biotech, the equipment is super expensive.. The chemicals are super expensive and dangerous.. You're not going to put those in a home office.. And so, there are limitations where you do still need an office, but I would say, even those businesses can do a lot remotely and are..

And so, my wife's a biotech engineer.. She still now works mostly at home and goes into the lab a few days a week.. And that is the same with most of their team.. I'm an investor in an aerospace company, they're building a plane and they are mostly working remotely and then going in to work on the actual hardware when they need to and spending a lot of time doing simulation.. And so it depends, and I think you can be conscious about the business, but it truly is, the sweet spot is pure software or pure digital services.. Those I think can go fully remotely almost immediately.. - So do you see the evolution 00:01:39,100 of online collaboration tools really exploding? I mean, we are in this very unique time where the world has turned upside down and we've all been forced to embrace this new online world.. Where do you see the tools evolving and where should they evolve? - Well, it's fascinating 00:01:54,160 to see the different platform shifts.. So, you, and they've been mostly technical.. So you had the rise of the internet in the late 90s..

Then you had web 2.0 in 2005, you had the iPhone and the app ecosystem in 2009 and people have been waiting for like, what is next? What's the next platform shift? And it's turned out not to be a platform shift.. Mobile is still mobile.. It's a workstyle shift.. And it's driving all of these enterprise companies with very old processes and tools to change overnight.. And so, I think you already mentioned it.. I'm seeing a just massive number of pitches for collaboration tools, video sharing tools.. Zoom will inspire thousands of companies.. And that's fantastic.. I think the amount of innovation we'll see in this space over the next 18 months is just going to blow our mind.. And when you ask an 18 months, like "how was remote collaboration back in 2020?" It'll be like, "oh, those were the dark ages..

"That was terrible"..