Sample Outline for an MLA Paper (Orlov)

Orlov 1

Anna Orlov

Professor Willis

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Outline

Online Monitoring: A Threat to Employee Privacy

in the Wired Workplace

Thesis: Although companies often have legitimate concerns that lead them to monitor employees' Internet usage—from expensive security breaches to reduced productivity—the benefits of electronic surveillance are outweighed by its costs to employees' privacy and autonomy.

I. Although employers have always monitored employees, electronic surveillance is more efficient.

    A. Employers can gather data in large quantities.

    B. Electronic surveillance can be continuous.

    C. Electronic surveillance can be conducted secretly, with keystroke logging programs.

II. Some experts argue that employers have legitimate reasons to monitor employees' Internet usage.

    A. Unmonitored employees could accidentally breach security.

    B. Companies are legally accountable for the online actions of employees.

III. Despite valid concerns, employers should value employee morale and autonomy and avoid creating an atmosphere of distrust.

Header includes writer's name, instructor, course, and date.

Word "Outline" and title, centered.

Outline begins with Orlov's thesis.

Outline uses standard format and is written in complete sentences.

Marginal annotations indicate MLA-style formatting and effective writing.

Source: Hacker/Sommers (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010).
This sample follows the style guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers,* 7th ed. (2009).

A. Setting the boundaries for employee autonomy is difficult in the wired workplace.

   1. Using the Internet is the most popular way of wasting time at work.

   2. Employers can't tell easily if employees are working or surfing the Web.

B. Surveillance can create resentment among employees.

   1. Web surfing can relieve stress, and restricting it can generate tension between managers and workers.

   2. Enforcing Internet usage can seem arbitrary.

IV. Surveillance may not increase employee productivity, and trust may benefit productivity.

A. A company shouldn't care how many hours salaried employees work as long as they get the job done.

B. Casual Internet use can actually benefit companies.

   1. The Internet may spark business ideas.

   2. The Internet may suggest ideas about how to operate more efficiently.

V. Employees' rights to privacy are not well defined by the law.

A. Few federal guidelines on electronic surveillance exist.

B. Employers and employees are negotiating the boundaries without legal guidance.

C. As technological capabilities increase, the need to define boundaries will also increase.