

**Non-Standard Work:
Alternative Working Arrangements
Amongst Knowledge Workers**

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PART I

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Introduction

This study is one of the major components of the second phase of the Labour Market Dynamics and Economic Participation Research Programme investigating non-standard work in New Zealand. The Labour Market Programme (LMD) Programme funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FoRST), is an interdisciplinary research project that was initially designed to explain the dynamics of economic participation by exploring the interface between households and labour markets of Hawkes Bay, Waitakere and Tokoroa. The first phase in the research sought to explain how individuals made decisions about access to, and participation in, the labour market, with particular emphasis on the life cycle of the household. A list of all previous LMD publications is provided at the end of this report.

The current phase of the research explores the experiences of men and women involved in non-standard working arrangements in New Zealand. The focus is on the transition from standard employment that was full-time and permanent, open-ended and generally secure into alternative employment arrangements such as independent contract work, contract company employment, or a combination of different income streams. More specifically, the research set out to examine the significance of changing working arrangements to understand the implications for work, family and households and to assess the implications for education and training and to ascertain what other policy implications might be. As labour markets are becoming more fluid and fractured, the changes to ways of working might have important implications for policy making both at governmental (central and local) and professional levels.

The area of non-standard work is vast and this research provides just a snapshot of alternative working arrangements. This study was limited to participants with a knowledge or technology focus that meant that our interest was with those who are relatively privileged, skilled and qualified as opposed to the economically disadvantaged marginalised individuals.

1.1 Report Outline

Part One of this report addresses two introductory issues. Firstly, there is a selective overview of some of the vast literature on non-standard work, particularly as it relates to defining this phenomenon. A sense of order is brought to this discussion by considering non-standard work in terms of variations on hours of work, tenure, the nature of employment relationships and where work is done. We also begin to critically engage with the literature by drawing on findings from our research which also provide the basis

for some novel concepts that are introduced. Secondly, we outline the various dimensions of the research process. Included as part of the process are descriptions of those who were interviewed and the types of non-standard work they engaged in.

Part Two represents the substantive sections of the report and they contain the detailed findings from the study. It begins with an exploration of the transition into non-standard work. This includes considering people's work histories, the transition itself, the likelihood of them remaining out of standard work, and the consideration they gave to future planning. Finally, a short sub-section examines the attributes that those interviewed felt were helpful for working in non-standard ways. The next section addresses the structure of non-standard working arrangements by considering, in particular, the important and varied role of relationships. Other areas canvassed include the contractor as specialist, the intensification of work, its enrichment, charging regimes, and the nature of work surveillance. How people organised their non-standard way of working is the subject of the sixth section. This is based on the recognition that these ways of working often mean an absence or weakening of external structures and involves considering the interaction of people's paid work with their relationships, responsibilities and activities in the private sphere. It is organised around the issues of time and space management, coping with more than one role, and managing the home/work nexus. The seventh section turns to a detailed exploration of the costs and benefits of non-standard work arrangements. The following seven sections then consider the interaction of a range of specific issues with non-standard work. These are: education and training; technology; networks; legislation, policy and compliance issues; associations and collaborations; insider/outsider relationships; and advice to young people.

Part Three of the report contains a series of concluding sections. Collectively, they can be considered as a summary of the research project. Of these sections, the first considers the paradoxes inherent in non-standard work. Then, a summary of the key findings is presented. Finally, some implications of these findings and the more general spread of in non-standard work are considered.

2. Diversity in Employment Arrangements

2.1 Introduction

There have been major changes in the structure of labour markets in all industrialised societies and these have been well documented (Henson, 1996; Crompton et al., 1996). They include shifting business strategies, demographic change, and the growth of service industries. One of the most significant outcomes, however, has been the emergence and growth of non-standard working arrangements in the last two decades of the Twentieth Century (VandenHeuvel et al., 2000; Burgess et al., 1999; McCartin et al., 1999; Mangan, 2000) as new occupations have emerged and occupations and skills have been restructured. Since non-standard work has always existed, it is probably more accurate to note that what has changed in the last 20 years is the increase in the proportion and consistency of non-standard work (Zeytinoglu et al., 1999:1). By some estimates, about 25 percent of jobs are in non-traditional employment areas (Management, June 2000) and in a range of possible employment forms that defy traditional career assumptions (Arthur et al., 1996:6). Thus, instead of working full-time for a single employer with the assumption of ongoing employment, there is a growing trend towards self-employment, part-time work, irregular hours that vary and less continuity of job tenure. Reliance on direct employment is decreasing and, instead, labour requirements are outsourced or employees provided by intermediaries. A complex web of relationships and arrangements emerge because of the numerous exchanges among individuals, teams and employers – “The interplay may seem downright chaotic” (Littleton et al., 2000:101).

Both supply and demand factors are implicated in the shifts to alternative working arrangements (Carroll, 1999). Some of the most common reasons given for these changes are that they allow employers increased flexibility, save on compensation costs, provide a way to obtain specialised services or skills not available in-house, and economic risk is transferred to the workforce (Carroll, 1999; Gramm et al., 2001). Advances in technology have also enabled the growth of non-standard working in a myriad of ways (and this is discussed in more detail later in this report). While large numbers of workers may have little control over the shift to non-standard arrangements and others, such as those caring for children, may see alternative arrangements as the only way of balancing competing responsibilities; for some with particular skills and backgrounds such a shift is by choice. Many of those interviewed in this study are from this last group.

Despite the growth in alternative arrangements, it seems that labour market statistics in New Zealand and Australia do not adequately portray the changing dynamics of the labour market (Mangan, 2000). The tendency for non-standard employment to overlap with traditional forms has created problems of measurement and ‘statistical agencies’ have been slow to react (Mangan, 2000:16). As Carroll (1999:103) observes, in a New Zealand context, “unfortunately, neither the census nor the HLFS [Household Labour Force Survey] are well designed for the purposes of researchers examining all the interesting dimensions of non-standard work”. In spite of these shortcomings, some

snapshots of the current situation are possible. For instance, one estimate puts the proportion of non-standard workers at around 57 percent of the New Zealand workforce (Carroll, 1999:104) with part-timers making up the largest category at 19 percent of those employed. In Australia, the non-standard workforce accounts for about 43 percent of the workforce (Jobs Letter, 1995). Studies in Canada (Betcherman et al., 1998; McCartin et al., 1999) have shown that while the increase in non-standard jobs has been gradual, non-standard work forms have accounted for about one half of the overall job growth in the last 20 years.

Matching the growth in non-standard working arrangements is a burgeoning body of literature on the subject that explores general and specific aspects of these changes. This includes a diverse array of terminology to capture the forms and arrangements that characterise different ways of working. Often the same terms are used in differing ways. The confusing array of definitions and terms and their inconsistent usage, together with inadequate data, are clearly inter-related issues. Not only is research hampered by limited data on non-standard work but attempts to employ what is available, say for international comparisons, is further hindered by differences in definitions and the very different data that results.

The next section provides an overview of how non-standard work has been variously conceptualised and defined. It also presents some limited data on the prevalence of non-standard work, most usually in this country. The literature that we have chosen to include from the large and diverse body of relevant work has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, it provides the necessary introduction and background to this study. This will be brief and will not cover issues such as trends. Secondly, our selections have been guided by the need to have some theoretical tools to explore the particular forms of non-standard work that emerged in the research. The discussion that follows moves from efforts to define non-standard work more generally, through to specific definitions of particular forms of alternative working arrangements. We then conclude with an overview of our conceptual approach.

2.2 The Literature – A Brief Overview and Commentary

Since undoubtedly there have always been exceptions to, or variations on, what might be considered standard work, it is appropriate to ask the question whether there is such a thing? Certainly, there has been a predominant pattern of employment and working that developed from the time of the Industrial Revolution and which became a pre-eminent form for male workers in the Twentieth Century that provides the yardstick against which employment categories have been constructed and understood. This pattern has generally been characterised by specific features including employment for wages or salaries by a single firm, where individuals work full-time on the employer's premises and expect (and are expected) to be employed for an indefinite period of time (McCartin et al., 1999:2). As Carroll notes, this sort of narrow definition could well be extended to include structural aspects of work organisation such as the Monday to Friday week and the work-

day¹. Thus, though there may be certain characteristics that are often cited in relation to standard work, unfortunately there seems to be no consistent or agreed definition.

Similarly, and unsurprisingly, confusion plagues efforts to conceptualise and enumerate those people engaged in forms of work that are outside of the predominant pattern (Barker et al., 1998:11) and this research project has been continuously confronted by such definitional and conceptual issues. Zeytinoglu et al. (2000), for instance, baldly state that there is no clear definition of non-standard work in the literature. More cautiously, Carroll (1999) suggests that non-standard workers are a disparate group of people and that any generalisations should be made with care, particularly as categories are not mutually exclusive and people often combine standard and non-standard forms. Indeed, in investigating the literature, it was found that most of the definitions of non-standard work did not take into account the diverse nature and combinations of working arrangements that the researchers identified in this study.

Kalleberg (2000:2) shows the range of approaches to describing these arrangements and ways of working through the use of descriptors such as “non-standard”, “non-traditional”, “atypical”, “flexible”, “alternative”, “market-mediated”, “vagrant”, “vulnerable”, “precarious”, “disposable” or “contingent”. Up to this point in the report we have, for simplicity sake, usually employed the term ‘non-standard’ or the adjective ‘alternative’ to describe the variations on work arrangements that we are focusing on. Like many others (for example, Mangan, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000), we recognise the failings and inadequacies of these and other such terms. As alluded to above, problems include the critical issue of defining what is standard or mainstream and, thus, what these new arrangements are alternatives to. The specific choice of particular terms can also generate problems. For instance, the term ‘alternative’ introduces a volitional component that may not always be a feature of a move out of standard work arrangements. Alternatively, the use of ‘contingent’ has been criticised as “often misleading since non-standard work arrangements may differ considerably in their degree of employment security” (Kalleberg, 2000:13).

Over and above such concerns are questions that arise over how useful such terms are in accounting for working arrangements that may not be standard but are none-the-less longstanding and widely practised. As Carroll’s (1999) figures show, though separate categories of non-standard work account for small proportions of the workforce compared to the 43 percent in standard work, collectively they total more than half of all workers. By acknowledging that he uses a narrow definition of standard work, Carroll (1999) leaves open the possibility that even larger numbers could be classified and counted as non-standard.

Though we recognise that the definitional landscape is already a crowded and contentious space, our research suggests a further concept that has some utility in describing and explaining non-standard forms of work. As has already been acknowledged, these forms of work emerge from, or arise out of, the predominant pattern of employment and, as such entail variations in one or more of the following: hours and location of work, tenure, and

¹ Set hours during the day as opposed to the evening and night hours worked by shift workers.

employee/employer relationships. They are, therefore derived from the predominant pattern and could be viewed as *derivative work forms*. While, obviously, this idea can be criticised, we feel that it answers some of the shortcomings of other terms. Thus we offer it as an alternative, and in this spirit we use it throughout the report alongside various other terms (e.g. alternative and non-standard). Some of the other approaches used in the literature to define and describe non-standard work are now briefly outlined below.

The 'list' approach to defining non-standard work has produced a number of variants. Wooden (1998) simply suggests that casual employment, fixed-term employment and contractors have features that place them outside the scope of traditional or standard employment. Carroll (1999) provides a more comprehensive list of the ways of working that should be included in non-standard work:

- Part-time;
- Employees working more than 50 hours a week;
- Self-employed;
- Employers;
- Residual casual/Fixed-term (non-permanent tenure);
- Multiple job holders; and/or
- Unpaid family worker.

McCartin et al. (1999) present a similar categorisation. Their groups include part-time jobs, short-term or contract employment, employment through temporary help agencies and "own account" self-employment. However, they exclude employers and those working over 50 hours a week (which, apart from Carroll (1999) above, most of the definitions omit).

Felstead et al. (1999:2) suggest that four main categories encompass most 'non-standard forms of employment and these include part-time work, temporary work, self-employment (own account) and multiple job holding or 'moonlighting'. They suggest that there are other types such as homeworking, teleworking, agency working, subcontracting and franchising but that most of these overlap with some of the aforementioned. They give examples of the overlap and suggest that one of the four main forms of non-standard work encompass the others (Felstead et al., 1999:2).

In agreeing that non-standard work is difficult to define, Mangan (2000:172) suggests a broad definition that includes the bulk of part-timers, all temporary workers and the contingent element of those in traditional arrangements is appropriate. He has suggested that a hierarchy of non-standard jobs exists and refers to independent contractors, contract company employees and teleworkers as the higher echelons of non-standard workers with a dominance of male workers. On-call workers are seen as step down the hierarchy although there are still professionals in this category, namely nurses and teachers. Then there are casual workers who are frequently used in the agriculture, retail and hospitality sectors, and who are predominantly women.

Other approaches to defining non-standard work, in addition to those that list various categories, have also been offered. As an alternative, Burgess et al. (1999:9) compare

various characteristics of different modes of employment. They see the standard employment model as distinguished by:

- Employee status;
- Full-time hours;
- Defined, regular working week; and
- Access to non-wage benefits.

These same authors (Burgess et al., 1999:9-10) then suggest that non-standard work is characterised by one or more of the following conditions:

- No employee rights or protection;
- No full-time income or guaranteed minimum income;
- No regular, predictable income;
- No regular, predictable working hours; and
- No minimum non-wage benefits.

Furthermore, non-standard work differs in terms of precariousness.

A useful distinction is provided by Beukema et al. (1999:112-117). This is based on the nature of the relationship between the parties. There are, then, non-standardised jobs with a direct employer/employee/contractor relationship, and non-standardised jobs with an indirect employer/employee/contractor relationship generally mediated by temporary staff agencies and contract companies. Drucker (1999:129) introduces another way of considering changing working relationships. She refers to the distancing of the employment relationship. By distancing, she includes all kinds of employment relationships where work is performed for a company outside a contract *of* service – i.e. temp agency workers, subcontractors, or the self-employed. Instead they would be engaged in contracts *for* service. New working arrangements are also sometimes characterised by contingency. Cahoney (1996:31) and Hipple (1998:22) refer to ‘contingent work’ which is defined as jobs that are structured to be short-term or temporary and workers have no explicit or implicit contract for ongoing employment. Contingency, a term originally coined by Audrey Freedman in 1985, referred to conditional and transitory employment arrangements (Houseman, 1999) that could include all non-standard forms of working.

The final perspective we include is drawn from the work of Arthur and Rousseau (1996:373) who suggest that contemporary employment can be defined as “a temporary state, or the current manifestation of long-term employability”. It can no longer be assumed that long-term commitments and stable relationships are a part of the employment relationship. Arthur and Rousseau accordingly introduce the idea of the ‘boundaryless career’. This is distinguished from the previously bounded or organisational career when terms were easier to apply, as systems were more static and defined with orderly employment arrangements. Furthermore, they suggest that the organisational career model was easily understood but that it is difficult to replace that logic with something more helpful in the new work environment. What is there to salvage from the old assumptions? Firstly, employment moves across boundaries involving separate employers, a career is validated outside the boundaries of an organisation/ employer and it is sustained by external networks, hierarchies are no longer valid, careers

are rejected for family or personal lifestyle reasons. In its place, we have *independence from* rather than *dependence on* traditional working arrangements (Arthur et al., 1996:6).

As will be apparent from the preceding discussion, there appears to be no one defining characteristic of all forms of non-standard work. This is likely to be due to the variety of non-standard forms of work that are possible, the different ways individuals structure similar ways of working, and the combinations of work roles they might engage in. This is Carroll's (1999) observation noted earlier, and a view that Mangan (2000) and Kalleberg (2000) agree with. Despite the lack of agreement over the terminology, definitions and conceptualisations of non-standard work in general, more precise definitions of various specific forms of non-standard work have been offered. The more common of these, many of which appeared in our research, are now presented and, where possible, some data are included to illustrate their prevalence.

While no single unifying and defining feature of non-standard work can be found in the literature, nor discerned from our research, these sources have helped isolate four key characteristics. They are, we feel, critical in describing the structure of work arrangements. Thus, hours of work, tenure, relationships, and location can be used to more precisely determine the predominant pattern of work arrangements. The ideal, 'standard' type against which variations can then be identified and classified are as follows:

Hours

- hours of work are full-time
- a workday orientation
- the Monday to Friday week.

Tenure

- is permanent

Relationships

- are singular (only one job)
- direct between an employer and employee

Location

- work is carried out or based at the employer's worksite

Importantly, alternative forms of work can be made up of variations in more than one area. The following discussion has been organised according to these four areas.

2.2.1 Variations on Hours and/or Tenure

These are presented in one section as many forms of non-standard work are characterised by variations in both. Shift and roster² workers could be included in this grouping (though none were interviewed in this study)

2.2.1.1 Part-time Workers

People employed this way work less than full-time though the hours vary a great deal. In some cases, it is determined by a percentage of full-time work, though more often part-

² Those who work other days than Monday to Friday.

time status is based on a maximum number of allowable hours per week. For instance, following the Australian, approach Mangan (2000) sets this limit at 34 hours per week. Given that it is based on the New Zealand context, this study adopts the threshold of 30 hours per week commonly accepted in this country (Carroll, 1999; Statistics New Zealand, 2000). This disparity between interpretations of what constitutes part-time hours illustrates the problems in comparing data from different jurisdictions.

There are two broad types of part-time arrangements. Firstly, workers can be permanent company employees where the only difference from full-time work is the reduction in working hours. Alternatively, there are temporary part-time arrangements that include casual, fixed-term or on-call workers that are generally hourly paid with irregular work. As can be seen from Table 1, the number of part-time workers has increased steadily but not significantly in the ten years between 1991 and 2000. Part-time work is the largest category of non-standard work.

2.2.1.2 Temporary Workers

The defining feature of this form of employment is that workers are not permanent employees of an organisation, even though they can work full-time hours. This is often used as an umbrella term for non-standard work (Mangan, 2000; Campbell et al., 2001). Nollen (1999:26) includes agency temporaries, on-call workers and independent contractors and leased executives in his definition of temporary workers. The more common categories under this heading are fixed-term contracts, casual and on-call work.

- **Fixed-Term Contract**

As the name implies, these workers are employed for a fixed term. Though other aspects of their employment may resemble permanent employees, it is the finite nature of their tenure that establishes their positions as non-standard. Unlike Nollen (1999), we feel that while contractors often resemble those on fixed term contracts, they differ in terms of the relationship since they are not considered employees of the organisation.

- **Casual Worker**

These workers may be employed up to full-time hours but they have no security of tenure. They are paid for the hours worked and these are generally unstable. In Australia and New Zealand, casual employment is an important component of the labour market and has been on the increase (Mangan, 2000). In Queensland, 50 percent of net new jobs over the period 1988 to 1998 were casual, including 80 percent of all new male jobs (Mangan, 1999: 49). However, there is very little data on casual work in New Zealand (Carroll, 1999:107). Mangan (2000:29) reports that in Australia, 27 percent of all employees are employed under casual conditions.

Table 1. Employment Status: Full-Time, Part-Time, Self-Employed and Multiple- Job Holdings' in New Zealand

<i>Average For Year Ended March</i>	<i>Total In Employment</i>	<i>Full-Time</i>	<i>Percent Of Employed</i>	<i>Part-Time³</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Self-Employed With and Without Employees⁴</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Multiple-Job Holders⁵</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1991	1,479,300	1,178,000	79.6	301,100	20.4	275,600	18.6	64,900	4.4
1992	1,461,200	1,147,000	78.5	314,200	21.5	284,300	19.6	58,300	4
1993	1,480,900	1,164,700	78.6	316,200	21.4	298,000	20.1	59,200	4
1994	1,529,400	1,204,500	78.8	324,900	21.2	310,700	20.3	66,900	4.4
1995	1,606,100	1,259,400	78.4	346,700	21.6	317,400	19.8	60,800	4.4
1996	1,685,600	1,322,700	78.5	362,900	21.5	336,100	19.9	78,500	4.7
1997	1,734,000	1,345,800	77.6	388,200	22.4	340,400	19.6	81,400	4.7
1998	1,735,900	1,341,800	77.3	394,100	22.7	331,000	19.1	83,400	4.8
1999	1,727,400	1,322,400	76.6	405,000	23.4	342,400	19.8	80,900	4.7
2000	1,756,500	1,352,100	77	404,300	23	353,000	20.1	74,500	4.2

Source: Adapted from Labour Market Statistics 2000 (StatisticsNZ, 2001)

³ Part-time workers are those who usually work fewer than 30 hours per week (Labour Market Statistics, 2000).

⁴ The definition of self-employed includes those in paid work who employ others as well as themselves and those who work on their 'own account' (Bururu, 1998:61).

⁵ Multiple-job holders are defined as "people for whom usual hours worked in other jobs are greater than zero" (Labour Market Statistics, 2000).

- **On-call Workers**

Those who are employed in on-call positions report to work only when asked to do so on an ad hoc basis. Relieving teachers are a good example of this.

2.2.2 Alternative Relationships

Variations on the type of work relationships arise in various ways with alternative forms of work.

2.2.2.1 Contractors

There have always been self-employed workers but new variants of self-employment, such as contracting, have emerged as a growing form of non-standard employment. Contracting has been identified as the largest of the four alternative working arrangements (Cahony, 1996). These authors include freelancers and independent consultants in this category. VandenHeuvel et al. (1995:6-7) and Greene (2000) further distinguish between *independent* and *dependent* contractors and this depends on whether the contractor provides labour services to one or mainly one organisation. The distinction is made depending on the degree of dependence in the employment relationship. Given their heavy involvement with one client, dependent contractors have also been referred to as de facto employees (Mangan, 2000). Some, like Carroll (1999:103), suggest that people are self-employed if they are not employing others. These are also referred to as 'own account' self-employed (Mangan, 2000:39). In addition, we identified another category of self-employed contractors who are in partnership with one or more other self-employed contractors.

2.2.2.2 Employers

Those who are self-employed and employing others are referred to as employers. According to McCartin et al. (1999:3), self-employed individuals who employ paid workers are not usually counted as non-standard workers as they may own very large businesses and are not considered precarious or vulnerable in the same way as self-employed people who work on their own. Contrary to this, the employers interviewed in this study were in small businesses that were as precarious as those of the owner-operators we spoke with. Thus, using precariousness in this sense seems arbitrary. Campbell et al. (2001:175), too, refer to the anomalous inclusion of some owner-managers in the growth of casual employment. Others, however, (for example Mangan, 2000; Carroll, 1999; VandenHeuvel et al., 1995) include employers in their definition of non-standard work.

Though no specific statistics are collected on contractors, data are available on the self-employed in general, and on employers. Table 1 gives the numbers and percentages of self-employed people (with and without employees) in New Zealand for the decade 1991 to 2000. Growth in self-employment has been modest but sustained. Nevertheless, self-employment and part-time employment have become a larger proportion of the workforce over the last 10 years. Carroll (1999) made the same finding for the period from 1986 to 1999.

A more specific breakdown of those who are in some way self-employed is provided in Table 2. The most significant growth in the last 10 years has been that of ‘own-account’ self-employment. In 1991, 158,700 people were self-employed without employees (57.6 percent of self-employed). In 2000, 224,300 i.e. 63.5 percent of the self-employed had no employees. This category, as a percentage of self-employed, grew by almost 6 percent whereas those self-employed employing others declined by almost 6 percent. This could be due to numerous factors. For instance, Bururu (1998:63) suggests that highly regulated labour markets that make it difficult to hire and fire workers may encourage employers to contract out services to minimise labour transaction costs. In addition, increasing non-wage labour costs such as ACC levies, pay roll taxes and health and safety compliance costs may also lead to a higher level of contracting arrangements. Some of those interviewed in this study acknowledged the effect of such factors (see Chapter 11).

Table 2. Proportions of Employers and Own-Account Self-Employed

<i>Average for Year Ended March</i>	<i>Total Self-employed</i>	<i>Employers as Percent of Self-Employed</i>	<i>Own-Account Self-Employed as Percent of Self-Employed</i>
1991	275,600	42.4	57.6
1992	284,300	41.3	58.7
1993	298,000	40.7	59.3
1994	310,700	41.3	58.7
1995	317,400	41.7	58.3
1996	336,100	41.2	58.8
1997	340,400	37.2	62.8
1998	331,000	39.0	61.0
1999	342,400	38.7	61.3
2000	353,000	36.5	63.5

Note: Excludes unpaid family workers and unspecified.

Source: Adapted from Labour Market Statistics 2000 (Statistics NZ, 2001)

2.2.2.3 Intermediaries

Just as standard work involves a direct relationship between employers and workers, so too can many of the preceding forms of non-standard work. However, it has been suggested by some (Cahoney, 1996:31) that employment is more frequently being arranged by an intermediary such as the temporary help agency or contract company. Some evidence of this was found in our study as temporary help agencies and contract companies provided a strategy for people to find additional or alternative employment. The importance of the intermediary is reinforced by the fact that often payment is arranged through them and not the company where the person is employed. No data is collected on such fine grain labour market detail as employment via intermediaries.

- **Temporary Help Agencies**

These provide workers or leased executives to client companies typically on a short-term basis. An agency consultant who was interviewed indicated that his agency acted almost like a marketing business for those seeking jobs. When contractors were unable to secure contracts themselves, they went to temporary help agencies. The ‘temporary’ nature of the relationship could be fairly long-term and last for years.

- **Contract Company Employees**

Typically, employment is arranged through a contract company e.g. cleaning, security or computing services. Workers are employed by the firms that provide a service to other companies.

2.2.3 Multiple Job Holding or Portfolio Working

As well as variations on the single relationship between parties, there is the possibility of a person being engaged in more than one form of work. It has been suggested (Upton, 1980 and Thomas 1988, cited in Felstead et al., 1999:7) that this form of non-standard work has been associated with “moonlighting” and tax dodging, “shoddy and dangerous work” and has therefore rarely formed part of the non-standard work debate in the UK. This is no longer the case. In fact, multiple job holding or portfolio working has become a common and legitimate strategy for employment and income supplementation in the changing world of work. Faced with increasing part-time work, a growing number of people increase their working hours by “patching together” (Felstead et al., 1999: 7) various part-time jobs.

As part of his calls for new terms to describe the changing face of work, Handy (1990:183) introduced the portfolio notion. However, as will be shortly discussed, he takes the idea much further than others by incorporating the mix of paid and unpaid work into the notion of a portfolio – “A portfolio is a way of describing how the different bits of work in our life fit together to form a whole” (Handy, 1990:183). Cohen and Mallon (1999:329) restrict their use of portfolio work to packages of work arrangements for the plying and selling of an individual’s skills in a variety of contexts. Mangan (2000:199) defines a portfolio worker as “a person who works simultaneously, in different jobs or aspects of a job”.

In the New Zealand context, Statistics New Zealand opts for the term ‘Multiple Job Holding’ to describe the narrower but more usual idea of holding more than one form of employment. As Table 1 shows, while the numbers of people holding multiple jobs has increased in the last ten years, the proportion of multiple job holders to those in employment has changed little over that period. The definition of multiple job holder used in this country is “people for whom usual hours worked in other jobs are greater than zero” (Labour Market Statistics, 2000). However, the aggregate statistics on this category do not provide information on the types of work that people combine. For instance, our study revealed a number of contractors who were also employees. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (July, 1999) classifies multiple job holders as those who have a second job and are an employee in at least one of their jobs. This definition creates

its own set of difficulties since people with two self-employed jobs, for example, are excluded from this definition. As of July, 1999, there were 447,400 multiple job holders in Australia representing 5.1percent of all those employed (Australian Bureau of Statistics, July 1999). In America, in the 1990s, just over 6 percent of all those employed were multiple-job holders (The American Workplace, 1998) and in British Columbia, Canada in 2000 5.6percent held more than one job (Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, 2001).

2.2.4 *Alternative Locations*

Individuals can also fall into the non-standard category as a result of where they do their work. This is sometimes referred to as working from afar, though the expression teleworking is often used in preference. There are a myriad of definitions for working from afar. The key here is the location of work. It can be viewed as a form of outsourcing that applies to both self-employed workers and employees. As England's (1998) five-level model illustrates, there are a variety of ways it can be employed.

- Work *at* home
- Work *from* home
- Telecommuting – which is the use of technology to reduce demand for physical travel;
- Teleworking – use of telecommunication within formal organisations; and
- Telecentres.

Nollen (1999:31) submits that telecommuting is not an alternative work scheduling or staffing arrangement. It is regular full-time or part-time work done at least partly out of the office. Teleworking has been defined as the use of telecommunication-related technology to conduct work in distant locations (Baffour et al., 2000).

Mangan (2000:45) cites the definition of teleworking from the Danish Board of Technology (1997) which is “work in which an individual is for a considerable period of time physically distanced from, and in electronic communication with, the place, the customer or the organisation to which their work effort is directed”. What this definition highlights is that many people telework to some degree, using technology to allow them to be distant from their workplace for periods. Some threshold is needed then, to distinguish those who use teleworking strategies and those who can be seen as predominantly working from afar. Though problematic in itself, the phrase “for a considerable period of time” is an effort to establish such a threshold. Just about all the contractors we interviewed, for example, worked in various locations. Many were based in their homes, but most spent some time at their clients' locations. Deciding who could be classified as teleworkers hinged on the proportion of time and work conducted away from those locations.

2.2.5 *Multiple Criteria*

As has been noted, many forms of non-standard work would fit into more than one of the above categories. Thus, for example:

- Part-time workers can be temporary or permanent employees.
- On-call and casual workers are also usually non-permanent staff.

- Temporary employees can be engaged to work any number of hours.
- Temporary agency employees can be classified according to their tenure, the hours they work or, as we have done, on the basis of the use of intermediaries in the employment relationship.
- The jobs that those who have more than one form of employment are engaged in can each possess characteristics that are themselves non-standard (in terms of hours, tenure, location and relationship).
- Teleworking can be a strategy used by workers whose employment would otherwise be considered standard and by those in work that could be classed as non-standard for other reasons.

Many of the work that people we interviewed were engaged in could be variously defined as non-standard according to multiple criteria

Since no single defining characteristic of non-standard work can be discerned, it seemed prudent to us to acknowledge the ambiguity arising from the presence of several defining features that would variously classify different forms of work as non-standard. The focus of any research or writing can then be used as a rationale for determining the prominence given to the particular characteristics. Though the focus alters as this report canvasses various areas of interest, this has essentially been our approach.

2.3 A New Conceptual Approach

From the preceding discussion, it is apparent that a variety of concepts and models have already been developed to understand and describe the changing face of work, and specifically the various forms of non-standard work. To this already crowded and confused theoretical arena we have introduced the idea of derivative work forms. In this section we want to outline a concept that emerged from our research and which has a more general application to the studying the changing face of work. That concept is the *life-work mosaic*. In arguing for the idea of a mosaic, we begin with the very basic and hardly novel idea that our lives are composed of more than paid employment. In developing his notion of the portfolio, Handy (1990), for instance, identifies two broad categories of work that we will be familiar with – paid and free (or unpaid) work. He further breaks each of these down into sub groups. Paid work is made up of employment for which wages or fees are received. Free work comprises:

- homework – “the whole catalogue of tasks that go on in the home” (Handy, 1990:184);
- gift or voluntary work – “work done free outside the home for charities, local groups, for neighbours or the community” (Handy, 1990: 184); and
- study work that Handy (1990) clearly differentiates from leisure but which he broadly defines to include sports training, formal and informal study and so on.

Though we accept Handy’s categories as representative of the working activities that people are, or can be, engaged in during their lives, we have elected to employ the metaphor of a mosaic rather than Handy’s portfolio, which will be used more specifically later. While not denying that some people approach all aspects of their lives in a very business-like manner, managing their activities as portfolios, we feel that the idea of a

life-work mosaic, as described below, has greater resonance. Including those pieces of the mosaic outside of paid employment is important, not just for recognising what feminists have long emphasised – the value of unpaid activities – but also because any analysis of alternative working arrangements frequently has to account for the more intimate connections between home and work that often arise as a result. This will be apparent in forthcoming sections of the report.

Mosaics imply the combining of pieces, many of which may be very different in size, shape, colour and composition. The edges of some pieces are sharp and clear while others are less so. In a mosaic some of the joins can be close and neat and others more dispersed. We can visualise a person's life as comprised of different pieces, just as a mosaic is. That is, people combine different forms of work, each with various characteristics. Some of these combinations of work would fit neatly together and others require more effort or concessions in order to make them fit. The distinctions between components can be very clear in some places and less distinct in others.

Given that the combinations of activities that people are involved in change across time, viewing the particular combinations of work that people are engaged with at any one point is very much like looking at just one area of the mosaic. By drawing back from focusing on the various smaller pieces, we are gradually able to discern a larger picture that portrays the mix of work activities people undertake at various points and how they change across time. Since change need not be global, that is only one or two pieces of work may be changed at any time, viewing the whole allows us to see how the various pieces that remain unchanged fit with those that are altered.

Having categorised work into various forms, it is important to note that each category is not simply represented by one piece of the mosaic. Rather, where a category is made up of a range of activities, then each is a piece of the mosaic. Thus, two forms of voluntary work are represented by two mosaic pieces. The various activities undertaken in the home, those related to study, as well as any voluntary work combine to create the unpaid work segment of a person's mosaic. Any activities undertaken for wages or fees form the employment segment. Holding more than one form of paid employment concurrently – what has variously been referred to as multiple job holding or another interpretation of portfolio work – is easily represented as multiple pieces making up the employment segment of the mosaic (though for simplicity we often refer to this as the employment mosaic). This image of a mosaic within the mosaic is used in preference to the idea of multiple jobs for a couple of reasons. Clearly, it fits with the overall theme of a mosaic. More importantly, our research found a number of people whose paid employment involved self-employment and a position as an employee. Our impression was that people who were self-employed did not really consider this work a 'job', which tended to be equated with being an employee. Though this might be dismissed as semantics, our view is that a workable model should reflect the experiences of those involved as closely as possible. When taken together, the free-work and employment segments produce the mosaic for an individual. Though we examine aspects of how the unpaid work segment interact with the employment segment, our main focus is on the latter area.

Since this model does not encompass all possible aspects of derivative work forms, we have elected to retain other concepts. Thus, for work characterised by indirect relationships, we retain the idea of *intermediaries*. Similarly, we retain the notion of *teleworking* as the means of distinguishing non-standard work that is done from afar. We have chosen to follow Mangan (2000:45) in using the Danish Board of Technology definition of teleworking (though there are some inherent problems in this definition which are discussed when we apply it to our sample). It is important to note, however, that those people employed via intermediaries or as teleworkers still have a life-work mosaic. Similarly, though such a non-standard work strategy as teleworking cannot easily be represented on a mosaic, some aspects of this style of working could be incorporated. For those who work from afar, whose work is unpredictable or on-call, or who run businesses from home, the merging of work into home life can be represented by the nature of the edge of the mosaic piece representing this form of work. Thus, it might have a less distinct edge, blending closely into pieces of the free-work segment. The arrangement of pieces can also hint at effects of this aspect of employment with free-work and employment pieces in close proximity, and one segment engulfing or partly surrounding the other. Some sense of the time that any activity takes up can also be represented relative to other activities. Thus, the mosaic of a person with no paid employment will be completely taken up by the free work mosaic. When some paid employment is undertaken this takes up a proportion of the mosaic relative to the other parts. Part-time work would not be as large a proportion as full-time employment. Whereas permanent employment would be represented as a large continuous piece across a lengthy time frame⁶, temporary or contract work would be signalled by smaller pieces bounded by other employment or free-work pieces.

While not displaying every variation on the standard employment arrangement, the mosaic approach does allow the image of a changing employment situation to be developed on a number of planes. The make-up of an individual's mosaic can be constructed for any one time and across time. Individual mosaics could be drawn together based on certain criteria for comparison. As will be apparent and highlighted in the report that follows, we found it a useful concept for exploring the non-standard work experiences of many of those interviewed.

As we have signalled earlier, though we chose the idea of a mosaic in preference to portfolios, we have not abandoned entirely the latter concept. Rather, we want to use it in a particular fashion. In this regard, we follow the lead of Mangan (2000:199), when he uses portfolios to describe the situation where a person “works simultaneously, in *different jobs or aspects of a job*” (emphasis added). Having already argued for the simultaneous holding of more than one job being represented by separate mosaic pieces, we obviously are interested in the second aspect of Mangan's definition. As is discussed in more a later section, contractors often had a variety of work sources – some were dependent on one or two main sources while others had a more diverse base. It is these sources or clients that we refer to as portfolios of work. The detail of, and arguments associated with, this approach are discussed in the section on the *Structure of Non-*

⁶ Remembering that the whole mosaic captures a large time frame.

Standard Working Arrangements. In this section we also develop the idea of closed portfolios and open portfolios.

2.4 Conclusion

The regulation of paid employment and the importance of such employment as a basis for participation in society seemed a relatively simple matter not so long ago (Beukema et al., 1999:111). Normally, paid work was performed at the employer's workplace and was mediated by a regular direct relationship between employer and employee. People worked about 40 hours a week and their pay was generally sufficient to provide for a family. This standard job also determined the rules regulating terms of employment and industrial relations. As a great deal of labour market literature and data attests, this situation has changed and continues to do so. For a variety of reasons, employers and employees are increasing engaged in alternative forms of work as standard jobs are being eroded and non-standard working arrangements are emerging.

Our study provides a small glimpse of the experiences and effects of some of these changes. As such it is a preliminary investigation into the alternative forms of employer/employee/contractor relationships. To begin with, researchers had envisaged a well-organised, neatly compartmentalised sample. Had we maintained this narrow focus, the conceptual and definitional problems would have been markedly reduced. It soon became apparent, however, that maintaining such an idealised approach was impossible given the array of forms, subtle variations, shifting patterns and possible combinations inherent in the notion of non-standard work which, in turn, exposed the complexities of non-standard work more generally, the inter-relationships between different forms, and their similarities and differences. Generating some order from this so that the experiences of people can be coherently reported has presented challenges. As has been illustrated in this section, prominent among such challenges has been the task of settling upon concepts and definitions from within and outside of the vast array of literature on non-standard work that have some fit with our empirical material and some utility in the reporting of our research findings.

In response to these challenges, we have elected to offer some alternative concepts – derivative work forms and the life-work mosaic – and presented a rationale for introducing these. The four key characteristics of work arrangements could be included as useful adjuncts to the theoretical debates on non-standard work. In general terms, we feel that any discussion of non-standard work should establish at the outset what standard work entails. In this report, we have elected to develop an ideal-type of standard work to use in this manner. Like others, we have also drawn on some existing theoretical work and have made it a primary task to clearly establish our use of such terms. This seems to be a worthwhile approach in any discussion of this nature.

3. Research Design

The aim of this research was to inform our understanding of changing work arrangements. More specifically, the objectives included:

- examining the significance of changing work arrangements,
- exploring individuals' perceptions and experiences of working in a non-standard way,
- identifying the implications of changing work patterns
 - for the household of a member working in non-standard ways,
 - for education and training, and
 - on local, regional and national policy.

As this study set out to explore the experiences of individuals working in non-standard ways in the changing employment arena in New Zealand, it followed that the qualitative paradigm using the interview method would be a useful approach to gathering the data we sought. Ethnography was used as the methodological approach to this study in an endeavour to avoid prescriptions generally associated with the positivist methods of research. "Ethnography is not far removed from the sort of approach that we use in everyday life to make sense of our surrounding" (Hammersley, 1990:2). The goal was to generate an account that reflected the participant's subjective experiences and perceptions of working in a way that was different.

Non-probability sampling, which does not seek to establish a random or representative sample (Cohen et al., 1999:331) was used to identify potential participants who had the 'information'. These were recruited in various ways that included the 'snowballing' technique, which included respondents suggesting others; networking with local government and business organisations; articles in local newspapers; general networking and the Internet.

3.1 Participants

Participants were chosen from people who lived in the greater Auckland area and who fulfilled three principle criteria. Firstly, to be eligible, individuals had to be currently involved in non-standard ways of working. How this is defined has already been discussed in some detail. They may have experienced career transitions from standard to non-standard work or have never worked in the 'traditional way'.

Secondly, the work they were involved in had to have either a knowledge or technology component (or both). This criterion requires further elaboration. Arthur and Rousseau (1996:184) define 'knowledge work' broadly as that not just limited to the professions, management or high technology, but which also includes any work that involves 'thinking'. Buwalda (1997) agrees that 'knowledge' includes information in any form, but also encompasses know-how and know-why, and involves the way we interact, as individuals and as a community. The technology component refers to the use of technology as an integral aspect of the execution of the role or contract. Finally, we wanted our sample to represent a cross section of people who met the first two criteria.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge that such criteria markedly limited our sample. As Carroll (1999:102) observes, non-standard workers are a disparate group working in different occupations. He goes on to note:

[Non-standard workers] differ widely in experience, education and other productivity-related characteristics. Non-standard workers will, therefore, have very different labour market capacities and opportunities from one another.

This will impact, he concludes, on the wages they earn and the conditions they experience. Having a knowledge or technology focus meant that our interest was with those who are relatively privileged, skilled, qualified and have some form of working experience as opposed to the economically disadvantaged, marginalised individuals in insecure, low skilled, elementary jobs. These contingent workers will form part of the next stage of the study.

For the purposes of this research, occupational clusters based on some of those outlined by Arthur et al. (1999:26-27) have been used. This provides categories based on administrators and managers; professionals; technicians and associated professionals; clerks/administration; and sales and service. A breakdown of the participants according to these clusters is provided in the section that overviews the sample. Forty people were interviewed as part of this study.

3.2 Interviews

The interviews were in-depth, semi-structured and lasted about an hour. As the interview is an interactional sequence, in-depth interviewing provides the greatest opportunity to find out what participants think and feel. Most of the interviews took place in the homes of participants, eight in offices, some at Massey University, Albany and one in a Food Court. Unless otherwise requested, the interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed and coded according to themes that emerged during interviews.

Prior to the interviews, participants received an information sheet outlining the aims of the study and detailing their right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time prior to the beginning of the analysis. Each participant then signed a consent form. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and participants will receive a copy of the report.

As part of the interview, participants provided some basic demographic information and employment background. Participants were also asked to complete a short questionnaire that required them to rate their experiences in non-standard work in relation to a number of key areas. Using Likert scales, these questionnaires provided a useful means to summarise the groups' assessment of their experiences. The areas canvassed related to flexibility, autonomy, work enrichment and intensification, surveillance of their work, job satisfaction and employment security in non-standard work.

3.3 The Interview Guide

An interview guide was used to ensure that similar themes were examined in each interview. The interview guide explored the experiences of the participants in a number of broad areas. A brief work history was obtained, as was an overview of their current work situation and the reasons for entry into their current working arrangement along with some detail of this transition. Some discussion of the nature and degree of any planning they undertook – in respect of their current and future employment – was also prompted. Education and training was addressed in a number of ways by considering people’s backgrounds, what they required at present and how they achieved this, as well as what they anticipated needing or undertaking in the future. Experiential issues such as autonomy, surveillance, work intensification and job security were also canvassed, as were the roles of networks, associations and collaborations, and their use of technology. Participants were asked about the regulatory environment, compliance issues and their conditions of employment. The advantages and disadvantages of their current working arrangements were explored and interviewees outlined the attributes they saw as important or necessary for working the way they did. A range of questions were targeted at how different alternative working arrangements interacted with people’s home and family life. Finally, participants’ views on the nature of employment in the future and what implications this had for young people were elicited.

3.4 Methods of Analysis

The approach used in this investigation was based on a study of in-depth interviews and the subsequent commonalities and divergences between these interviews. Data was coded according to themes and presented as descriptions and interpretations. Quantification is minimal and statistical analysis played no role in this research. The researchers wanted to undertake the widest possible exploration of all the issues that surround non-standard work. Consequently, this study only provides an exploratory snapshot of non-standard work. The in-depth interview method was chosen as it assists in achieving what Bauman (1990:231) suggests is an extended commentary on the experiences of everyday life. In this way, an attempt was made to construct subjectivity in the area of work as opposed to the more common quantitative research methodologies which tend to marginalise subjectivity and reduce the rich diversity of experiences to an average or mean.

3.5 Sample Overview

This section provides an overview of the forty people who were interviewed as part of the research. It begins with some demographic information. Then details regarding the types of work they were involved in are presented. Breakdowns according to the key characteristics of hours, tenure, relationships and location are included.

3.5.1 People

The interviewees were fairly evenly split by gender (19 male and 21 female). They were aged between 21 and 52 years. The majority was clustered in the 35-45 year bracket (53

percent) though this was more pronounced for females (62 percent) as compared to males (42 percent). Almost two-thirds of the interviewees were married or in like relationships (63 percent) and the majority of households contained children (68 percent)⁷. While the remainder of those interviewed were single, a little over a quarter of these people also cared for children. Overall, children were being cared for in 53 percent of households where people were involved in non-standard work.

The educational background of those interviewed showed a leaning towards tertiary (university or polytechnic based) qualifications with 60 percent of people holding such credentials. Those whose highest qualifications were secondary school based made up 17.5 percent of participants. Professional or trade certifications and the like accounted for the balance.

Twenty-seven of those interviewed (67.5 percent) were born in New Zealand. Only one of this group identified themselves as Maori. The balance of people had immigrated to this country at some point. They had come from a diverse range of countries: United Kingdom, South Africa, Niue, Malaysia, India, and Canada. The first two had provided the bulk of these immigrants (69 percent in total; 46 percent and 23 percent respectively).

In terms of residence, those interviewed came from various parts of the greater Auckland area. The extremes were Tuakau in the south, and Helensville in the north. Table 3 shows the more specific breakdown. Unlike standard workers who travel from their domicile to a single workplace, most of those interviewed worked in a variety of locations. It thus became impractical to try and portray work locations. However, residence remains an important feature of the analysis since many people, especially those working for themselves, did so from their homes for some or all of the time. Few maintained separate offices and those who worked elsewhere often did so because they needed to be 'on-site' at client's businesses for various reasons. More discussion on this facet of non-standard work is undertaken later in the report.

3.5.2 Work

While the transition into non-standard work will be dealt with in some detail in the next section, some observations that contribute to our profile of the interview group can be made here. Only two of those interviewed had not had any experience of standard work, having moved from school or university into non-standard employment⁸. Apart from one young man who had worked in full-time standard employment for just six months after graduating from university, all the others had worked in various standard employment arrangements for between six months and thirty years. For just over a third of participants (35 percent), this was not their first exposure to non-standard working arrangements.

⁷ Four households were made up of couples or individuals with children who were themselves now adults. These are not included in this calculation.

⁸ By this we mean that although they might have had holiday jobs (including full-time positions), they had not held a permanent full-time position prior to their entry into non-standard arrangement.

Table 3. Breakdown of Participants' Places of Residence, Auckland

Locality	Number	Percent
North	17	42.5
West	12	30.0
Central	7	17.5
South	3	7.5
East	1	2.5
Total	40	100

Note: North is made up of Rodney District = 10 and North Shore = 7

At the time of the study, 39 (78 percent) interviewees had been established in their non-standard work arrangements for two years or more. Of the remaining nine cases, three people were celebrating their first anniversary around the time of the interview and six were fledglings, having been in the new arrangements for less than a year. For those who had been working this way for two years or more, the average lifespan was six years at the time of interview. Eight people from this group had managed alternative working arrangements for ten years or more, two of whom had worked the longest histories of 14 years.

Following Arthur et al. (1999:26-27), the occupations of those interviewed have been organised into clusters⁹. Table 4 presents this breakdown for occupations before and after the transition to non-standard work. Like so many aspects of any discussion of non-standard work, the allocation of people to such categories was problematic. For instance, people who had a mosaic of roles can have dissimilar occupational ratings. We have rated these people on the role that occupied the majority of their time. It also proved hard to rate derivative work forms in relation to categories developed with traditional work in mind. The decision to present before and after summaries is based on the changes that the transition to non-standard work often brought. While a simple connection exists, say, for an engineer who moves from being an employee to running their own business, there is little relationship between a business manager who moves into commercial printing. Table 4 shows that the largest changes are in people giving up some managerial or administrative role to move into a more professional or technical position. Further aspects of the connections and disconnections between before and after features of this transition are presented in a forthcoming section. Those in the category of “other” moved from school, university or welfare into alternative work arrangements.

⁹ We have used the first five of their nine-cluster set as the remaining four are not applicable for our purposes. They are agricultural and fishery workers; trades workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers; and elementary occupations.

Table 4. Breakdown of Interviewees by Occupational Cluster and Work Arrangement

Category	Pre-Transition	Post-Transition
Administrators & Managers	10	4
Professionals	12	15
Technicians & Associated Professionals	12	16
Clerks & Administration Personnel	2	2
Sales and Service Personnel	0	3
Not in Paid Employment	4	0
TOTAL	40	40

As will be apparent from the earlier discussion on the *Diversity in Employment Arrangements* there are many ways that non-standard work can be described. For the purposes of this section we have initially allocated each case according to the type of working arrangements. This is presented in Table 5. While such a portrayal does not show every non-standard feature of each case, it provides a simple way of initially presenting all the cases. As is apparent from this table, the vast majority of those interviewed could be classed as contractors. Though we have placed employers in a separate category, apart from the distinction of having employees they engaged in very similar activities to contractors. The category of contractor has been broken down into dependent and independent groupings, with the latter further separated according to whether the interviewee was an ‘own-account’ contractor or had business partners¹⁰. Those who were primarily identified as employees were also divided into two sub-groups based on the presence or not of intermediaries in the employment relationship.

Obviously the total in Table 5 exceeds 40. This is due to one of the features of non-standard work discussed in an earlier section – the practice of some people to engage in more than one form of employment at any particular time. We have elected to describe this in terms of a mosaic. Table 6 identifies the cases where people had multiple pieces to the employment segment of their mosaic. It shows that eight people were working as both employees and contractors when they were interviewed. The nature of each person’s mosaic differed, and neither role (as employee or contractor) was necessarily dominant. One of the two people who had standard employment relationships also held two forms of paid employment, but both were as an employee. The other employee was considered non-standard in that not only did she vary her hours of work by being employed part-time, but she could also be viewed as a teleworker. Finally, two of those who were interviewed were employed through intermediaries as temporary help agency employees. Table 6 also shows that one of the independent contractors with partners also was an employer. It was difficult to allocate this woman to either category. Although she employed people these were involved in one very separate contract and not part of her general business which she and her partner conducted without other assistance.

¹⁰ All the dependent contractors were ‘own-account’ contractors.

A further feature of Table 6 is that it illustrates the nature of the various employment relationships engaged in by those interviewed. Hours and tenure were other key areas where variations on standard work can occur. These are not all apparent from Table 6, but some observations can be made regarding our sample. In respect of the former, as we have already seen, one criterion for being considered non-standard is a variation on full-time hours. Such is the nature of non-standard work that several provisos need to be made about this calculation. Firstly it can be based on availability. Thus, even though the flows of work could be uneven, people treated their businesses as full-time or not by clearly setting out the hours they wanted to commit to it. Secondly, for those with work mosaics the calculation is based on a sum of all their work roles. Thirdly, in some cases the total is also calculated over periods so that a person working long hours for a week or two, and then having time off to study or the like, would average out at less than full-time. On these bases, the majority of those interviewed (80 percent) were engaged in full-time work. As to tenure, it is difficult to relate this idea to contractors since they have a different relationship with those who engage their services. However, for those who were employees, some breakdown is possible. The two temporary help agency employees were clearly not employed on a permanent basis. Three other people were contracted for defined periods and another trio were casual employees. Two of the latter group, though they worked casually, saw themselves as long-term casual employees. In the five remaining cases, people were engaged on permanent basis¹¹, with one of these holding two permanent part-time positions.

In respect of location, another means of categorising alternative forms of working and that has been canvassed earlier is the idea of teleworking. In this study the Danish Board of Technology's (1997) definition (cited in Mangan, 2000:45) has been accepted: "work in which an individual is for a considerable period of time physically distanced from, and in electronic communication with, the place, the customer or the organisation to which their work effort is directed". Two examples can be drawn from our sample. In one case the woman worked part-time for her company and in the other the man was an own-account contractor. As such they could both already be classified by other means as non-standard workers. In the case of the woman, she never went into her company's office, but communicated and worked via the Internet etc. She worked outside the home for periods as her role involved directly providing services to a single client on behalf of that company. The man prepared personalised business planning for potential immigrants but very seldom met with the clients or the immigration agencies who provided these, as both were often located overseas. Again e-mail and the Internet were the crucial factors.

¹¹ The total number of employees is 12, but since one person held both a casual and part-time position, thirteen cases are included in this count.

Table 5. Breakdown by Type of Non-Standard Working Arrangements

CATEGORIES	
Contractors	
Dependent Contractors	5
Independent Contractors – Own Account	21
Independent Contractors – Partners	7
Employers	4
Employees	
Direct	10
Temp Agency Employees	2

Table 6. Breakdown by Type and Mosaic of Non-Standard Working Arrangements

CATEGORIES		People With a Paid-Employment Mosaic
Contractors		
Dependent Contractors	5	1
Independent Contractors – Own Account	21	5
Independent Contractors – Partners	7	2
Employers	4	1
Employees	10	8
Temp Agency Employees	2	2
		1

Determining when teleworking is a defining characteristic of non-standard work depends heavily on the interpretations of the phrase “a considerable period” in the above definition. Rather than use a quantitative measure we opted for a qualitative judgement based on the interviews¹². From our sample, 23 people (57.5 percent) were judged to meet the Danish criteria for being considered a teleworker. Regardless of the value that is decided upon there will still be those who fall marginally short but where teleworking is still an integral strategy to their non-standard working but not quite a defining characteristic. In these instances, people might be in non-standard working arrangements, so defined because of other characteristics, but which are augmented by teleworking. Many of the contractors interviewed in this study fell into this group. These, in turn, have to be distinguished from people who, like many employees, have a high level of technology usage in their non-standard work. This employing of technology is addressed separately in Chapter 9 of the report.

A rich example of a teleworking role emerged from an interview that was undertaken early in the research¹³. It portrays how technology can play a part not only in working, but also in securing work, and in networking and education. After having had a baby, this woman was looking for work that she could do from home. She had given up her standard job as a pharmacist prior to the birth. Her search took her to job boards on the Internet where she found an opportunity as a writer for a pharmaceutical company in America. After successfully completing a test piece she has been offered work on a regular basis with that company, and has secured similar work with other companies. Interestingly, she has never met or spoken to her American boss. Some confusion over his name meant that for a time she thought he was a woman. So successful has this way of working proved that she is now a full-time teleworker. While the bulk of this is on-line, she does send hardcopy to one local company who then use e-mail for revisions. She maintains an ongoing search for work opportunities via the Internet. This also provides a means of networking and she belongs to a writers’ group. As well, she has her own webpage and newsletter for those involved in or considering teleworking. Networks are important not only for support, but may provide further work opportunities. Importantly, the Internet provides the means by which she does the necessary research for her writing and when occasionally interviews are required she does these by telephone. Finally, though paid by cheque for her first assignment, payment is now also done electronically.

¹² It needs to be acknowledged here that the qualitative nature of the interviews did not provide precise breakdowns on time spent at different location and proportions of technology use necessary for calculating a quantitative measure.

¹³ Because this woman lived outside the Auckland area she was not included in the sample. Using such geographically based criteria perhaps illustrates the persistence of our own rather traditional orientations, since one of the keys to some derivative work forms is their overthrow of such limits.

PART II PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4. The Transition and Beyond

While any labour market transition is likely to be the result of a mix of factors, in an analysis of shifts into self-employment in New Zealand, Bururu (1998) follows a useful trend in employing the idea of push and pull factors. The former are factors associated with poor employment alternatives, often the result of weak labour markets, and mean that people are forced into such a move. Other factors, such as personal circumstances, may also exercise a push towards this type of work. The latter set of factors is concerned with the attractiveness of the alternative. As will be shown later, it is easy to conceive of both push and pull factors working in combination to promote change. This seems a useful way to explore the transition into non-standard work. Recognising the influence of multiple factors in any transition but acknowledging the difficulties in a detailed factorial analysis, the following discussion is based on the most prominent reasons identified as lying behind the transition.

In the majority of cases (60 percent), people were attracted – that is, pulled – into alternative work arrangements. Males made up almost two-thirds of this group. Indeed, almost 80 percent of all the male interviewees were prompted into alternative arrangements by pull factors. Most of the moves into self-employment – some form of contracting or small business operation – were driven by a desire to be employed this way. Sometimes this was couched in dissatisfaction with being an employee and some people integrated hopes for an improvement to lifestyle and/or income into their motives. A small group saw alternative working arrangements as one way to balance other commitments, such as full-time study, sport, and caring for a family.

By contrast, only six transitions (15 percent) can be identified as exclusively the outcome of people being pushed into non-standard work forms. In one case, the company a woman worked for was in financial difficulties and their offer of some work as an independent contractor seemed her only alternative at the time. From these meagre beginnings she was able to gradually build a successful business. Two other cases involved immigrants who were unable to get desired work in their particular fields. One opted to take on a temporary appointment through a temporary help agency. Eventually this woman got taken on in a permanent full-time position. In the second case, after being unable to gain employment in his profession, the man slowly developed what has proved to be a successful and lucrative business assisting potential immigrants. As well, there was a woman who struggled to get paid employment following a serious car accident but who gradually fashioned a business out of the various teaching, writing and computing activities that she had been involved in as part of her recovery and which she found so personally satisfying. She felt that the difficulties she had getting work after the accident left her with few if any alternatives but some sort of self-employment. Another case

involved a woman who had a child prematurely and could not return to her job. The only option for continuing in some form of paid work, a necessity in her circumstances, was to utilise her computing skills by working for herself from home.

The remaining cases demonstrate the care that is needed in exploring transitions and the usefulness of qualitative interview data for this. It is all too easy to simply align particular circumstances with one or other sets of factors. For instance, being laid off is clearly a push factor. However, other factors may also be implicated as this next example shows. While this man was indeed laid off, he took his time finding work. He eventually chose to work as a contractor as he was keen to do a particular type of work but was unsure if he wanted to work for the company that was offering it. They agreed to the alternative arrangements and this proved to be the beginning of a successful venture into independent contracting. This case was one of ten (25 percent of all cases) – eight of whom were women – where both push and pull factors are implicated in the moves into alternative working arrangements. Thus, while people may have experienced being pushed into a transition, the decision to choose non-standard work arrangements was also the outcome of other factors playing a significant part – say preferences for particular types of work, circumstances or attractive offers. Some further examples will help illustrate this. There was the case of a woman who was about to be laid off and found a temporary opportunity through a placement agency. Though she was keen to find another job and would soon be out of work, she was not forced into accepting this temporary position. Rather, positive reports from others who worked this way, together with the very favourable remuneration that was on offer, saw her accept this position. In another case, a woman was made redundant from her position in the printing industry. She got some work as a freelancer, which she found far from satisfying, and had various opportunities for full-time employment though she felt that none of these matched her skills and experience. Eventually, she decided to start her own business. Finally, another woman chose non-standard work as a means to utilise her particular skills in order to fulfil her desire to move off welfare.

As part of a consideration of the transition into non-standard work it is interesting to examine the connection between a person's standard work background (their training, qualifications and work history) and the nature of the work that they moved into¹⁴. Three broad categories can be discerned to describe this relationship. Firstly, people can move into non-standard work that replicates or closely resembles their background. An example would be an engineer who moves from being an employee to an independent contractor. Around 45 percent of our sample fell into this category. Secondly, the new arrangements might contain work that draws on that background and/or has some similarities, but is not identical. A woman who was a trained nurse, for instance, now performed health assessments for a government agency. This type of cross-over was apparent in just over a fifth of cases (21 percent). Finally, the work that arises out of the new arrangements can have no relationship or similarity to the person's background. A clear case in this category was a business manager who started his own specialist printing business. A little more than a third of those interviewed (34 percent) met this criteria.

¹⁴ This differs from the breakdown according to occupational clusters before and after the transition that has already been provided in Table 4.

Not unexpectedly, the transition itself was often characterised as a risky time. People were stepping into the unknown. As one man put it:

The transition was scary. I think it is always scary when you jump out on your own.

He had done a number of things to lessen the risk, however, such as eliminating his mortgage. Despite the uncertainty, the move into alternative arrangements was usually accomplished by a complete break with what people were doing previously. Very few people maintained all or part of their prior role while they became established in the new one, instead preferring a complete break. Only one person kept their original standard arrangements while embarking on some alternative form of work – working as both an employee and an independent contractor¹⁵. As is evidenced in Table 5, some developed mosaic patterns – matching contracting with some form of employee role, for example. These offered a way to spread the risk and they almost always represented a mix of new working arrangements rather than the new tagged onto the old.

The transition into non-standard work was in the context of varying degrees of planning. As was apparent from the earlier discussion of the push-pull factors behind the transitions, a few moves were forced on people. In general, though, people had time to contemplate and plan. One woman thought that using this time productively and being deliberate in planning was a vital ingredient to success.

The reason why people are failures especially is because a lot of thought hasn't gone into it.

As in her case, some people prepared detailed business plans and many would continue with this approach during their time in business. Others adopted a less structured, more haphazard approach to planning the transition. In some cases people appeared to stumble into their businesses quite unprepared and unaware of these aspects.

It has just been a constant struggle because I have had to keep the money coming in on the one hand but also learn the ropes business wise. It has just been an incredibly hard slog really. I suppose, like financially as well, because I haven't probably been that great with the financial side of things. Basically you have to do everything yourself and that's probably the hardest part, trying to increase your knowledge all the time and learn as you go along, and also just to be in control of your situation.

Regardless of their approach at set up, the future for those in non-standard working arrangements was often in mind. This is no more apparent than when the interviewees were asked whether they were contemplating making the reverse transition. Of our sample, very few people thought they would return to standard work. Almost three-quarters of the group of interviewees felt that they were highly unlikely to make the reverse transition. Cohen et al. (1999:344) in their study on the move to self-employment also found that there was a marked lack of propensity to return to organisational employment. Any that might consider it felt that they would have to be tempted by an exceptional offer: considerably greater earnings, flexible conditions, a particular job, or

¹⁵ We base this finding on the point where standard employment arrangements ceased or any alternative arrangements were first commenced. Thus a person who was not in paid employment for a time, then engaged in casual work before becoming an independent contractor, commenced their non-standard arrangements when they engaged in casual work.

the like. It seems that even the disadvantages of non-standard working arrangements, as discussed in a later section, did not sufficiently outweigh the advantages to prompt people to return to standard work. Even those who thought that they might alter their arrangements in some way still felt they would stay within the non-standard paradigm. Thus a few independent contractors were thinking of taking on a part-time position as an employee (doing the same sort of work) in order to provide some stability of income, thereby adding to their work mosaic. The level of satisfaction with their non-standard working arrangements, as shown in Figure 1, seems to confirm the low likelihood of people opting out of this way of working.

In only four cases did people indicate a very likely return to standard work arrangements. A short time after the interviews were completed one woman who had a temporary contract through an agency secured her desire to get permanent employment. For two others, the end of study and child rearing commitments seemed a likely point when they would engage once again in standard arrangements having moved into alternative circumstances to allow this mix of paid and unpaid work. Finally, another woman was tiring of the demands of combining three roles (two part-time positions as an employee and some casual work as a contractor) and was keen to find a single permanent full-time position. However, even she wavered wondering if the sense of career she desired might be constructed via a different mosaic of jobs than she currently held.

If I was in a position to be doing a couple of jobs part-time and then to be going in the right direction career wise then I would be more than happy with that.

This has some echoes with Arthur and Rousseau's (1996) notion of the 'boundaryless career' that was surveyed earlier in this report.

Ambivalence, such as this woman experienced, was characteristic of others who were also uncertain of their intentions. They acknowledged both the pros and cons to both their current alternative arrangements and standard work patterns. Most of those who were considering a return were reluctant to give up all the benefits they recognised as part of working in alternative arrangements – flexibility and control over their working lives being prominent among these. The issues often concerned how non-standard work might be altered to minimise the difficulties or negatives – most often related to the demands of working this way and the uncertainty and isolation. These will be canvassed in more detail in Chapter 7 on advantages and disadvantages.

A sentiment expressed by a few people showed that not only would the transition back to standard employment be difficult to adapt to, it might be that some alternative working arrangements could actually hamper the return move. As one woman who held a mosaic of work as an independent contractor and two part-time positions as an employee put it,

It seems as though the part-time stuff that I now have on my CV doesn't carry the sort of credibility that full-time work has.

She had been employed part-time for several years when interviewed. Another woman, who had a successful contracting business in the field of financial management had sent her CV to "a thousand 'head-hunters' and they just ignore it because I am non-standard and they don't know what to do with me".

Given the uncertainty of work experienced by many of those in alternative employment, the question was not just whether to remain in non-standard work. It also involved how to best sustain working this way which, in the case of contractors, meant how to maintain and possibly grow the business. To this end, almost everyone recognised the importance of future planning but how each person achieved this, if they could manage it at all, varied considerably. Even those working as employees or who had more reliable streams of work were involved in reflection and planning. One woman, for instance, who worked on longer-term contracts at a senior level through a temporary help agency still searched for and evaluated new opportunities on a regular basis. In another case, a dependent contractor who worked exclusively for one client had grown bored of the work and was considering what new form of business she might become involved in.

For many contractors, surviving day-to-day was pre-eminent and though they recognised the value of planning they struggled to do it. The particular uncertainty of the building industry only exacerbated the situation for this man. Even though he was a dependent contractor, acting on behalf of one manufacturer/supplier, he sold products to numerous clients.

It's just day-to-day. ...every contractor is the same, we don't know if we are going to get paid. ...You look at things and think I should buy that – maybe not, maybe we should wait until we have got the cash ... people just are not spending because you can't take the risk. ...You can't plan”.

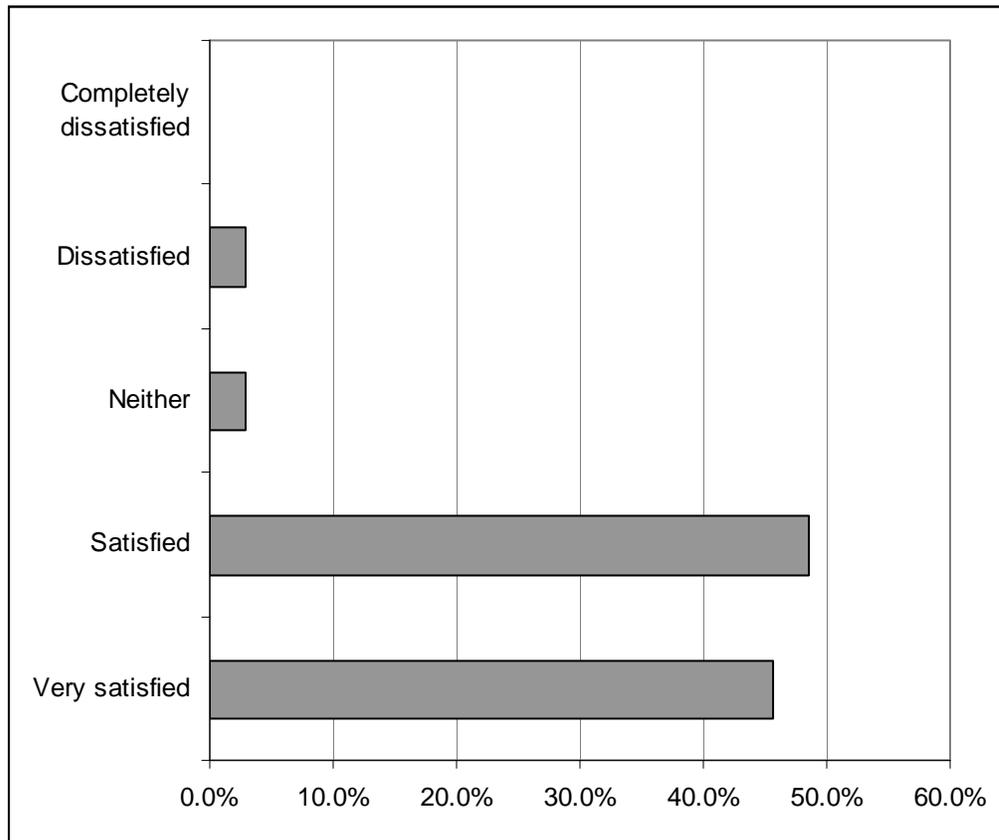
Some independent contractors were often content, therefore, to rely on established clients.

Finding the time for planning, when actually doing their business was all consuming, was also an issue:

I think that is probably the most frustrating thing in this situation, that you are constantly trying to find the time to do the creatives, develop the marketing, find what areas are doing well and sort of trying to get a bit more organised. ... but we are so busy working that none of us have had time to actually to do that.

Even with such constraints people recognised the need for future planning and often, at the very least, had ideas in mind.

Figure 1. Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with Current Non-Standard Working Arrangements



Others who were interviewed took a very deliberate approach to planning. In one case a woman and her partners undertook two major planning retreats per year. During these retreats, which lasted two or three days, they would map out their larger scale vision and direction for the next while. They would also examine trends and movements in their industry and competitors' activities. As well, though the partners were some distance apart, they got together on a regular basis for management meetings. It seems that the presence of partners eased the issue of planning and sometimes partnerships would have one person designated to devote a portion of their time to growing the business. For example, one pair of partners split the workload between one person doing the business management and administration, and the other marketing the company.

Finally, beyond maintaining and growing their existing working arrangements, for a few people, planning involved the consideration of how their mosaic of employment might be altered. This was apparent in the cases that were alluded to earlier where people were considering working as an employee on top of their contracting role. In another example, alongside possible strategies for developing his independent contracting business, one man was also looking for another business to purchase in order to provide a passive

income that would buffer him against the ups and downs of contracting. He was also considering whether to expand his business into more actively marketing an IT product he had developed.

4.1 The Attributes of Non-Standard Workers

It is not the intention of this sub-section to drift into some sort of personality analysis that attempts to identify attributes or characteristics that predispose people to particular career or work trajectories. Rather, based as it is on an interview question that asked participants what attributes or characteristics they considered important or useful for those engaged in non-standard work forms, it simply aims to summarise the answers people gave. As such it provides a subjective component to the profile of our sample. Naturally a wide range of answers was given and people often used various but similar terms or ideas to describe particular concepts. This created difficulties in trying to distil the most common features. By clustering people's answers into broad categories, however, the prevailing themes can be discerned.

The most commonly identified characteristic was the need for a sense of passion in what people did. Though this could equally apply to any work situation, for those in alternative employment arrangements having a passion for what they did often made up for, or was a reason to endure, the various negative aspects of alternative work forms. Finding what it was that you felt passionate about was often part of the advice interviewees felt they would give young people about working in non-standard ways (or more generally).

You need to love what you do because, otherwise, it's just not worth it. ...I think if you are in it just for the money, just to pay the bills or whatever, it is really not going to work. Because the demand is so great all the time that you really do need to feel very passionate about it and involved in what you are doing

While in some cases, like the one above, this sense of passion was rather baldly stated, in more muted but undeniably present.

I love getting up and going to work, I enjoy my job, I love the industry I work in, I love it because no day is ever the same. ... So for me that is a real positive, so that is something that I still enjoy and I have been doing it for seven years and I would want to keep doing it for the next seven.

Other qualities commonly identified were the need to be focused, committed, hard working, energetic, enthusiastic and determined. Those who were self-reliant and self-motivated were seen as more likely to succeed. Being extremely well organised was also highly valued, and tied in with this was the ability to multi-task. Not unexpectedly, an entrepreneurial attitude alongside initiative, innovation and vision were considered positive attributes. Confidence was also seen as a necessary characteristic, though some people commented that they appeared more confident than they felt, and that this was one characteristic that could take some time to develop. Indeed, a few of those interviewed noted that many attributes that were useful for working in derivative work forms were not necessarily part of every person's make up, but had to be developed and nurtured.

Finally, having some existing level of expertise was seen as an important basis for moving into less traditional ways of working.

5. The Structure of Non-Standard Working Arrangements

This section largely focuses on the nature of work undertaken by contractors, though some insights into other forms of non-standard work are offered. The areas explored include the make up of particular relationships in non-standard work. This has two aspects. Firstly, the varieties of relationships that provide work are explored, and here the idea of portfolios is reintroduced. Secondly, other relationships are often drawn on to get work done. (This has a different emphasis from Chapter 10 on networks). Other areas that are canvassed are the contractor as specialist, the intensification of work, its enrichment, charging regimes, and the nature of work surveillance in non-standard arrangements.

The standard work arrangement involves an employee having a direct relationship with a single employer. Some of those who had alternative work relationships replicated this type of relationship. They included some employees and dependent contractors, though the former sometimes combined this with other working arrangements. As well, many independent contractors had just such a relationship with the clients they did work for. Contractors with this type of relationship are sometimes referred to *as de facto employees* (Mangan, 2000).

The most obvious variation on the standard direct relationship arrangement is to have an indirect relationship. This is most clearly illustrated by those people who used intermediary agencies. Thus, although they have the appearance of being an employee, they obtained their position through the agency and their pay etc is organised by the agent. Less obvious, is the presence of just this sort of relationship with some independent contractors. They, too, appear to be working directly for a client but the work has been organised and provided by another party. The idea of sub-contracting nicely captures this relationship. Amongst those who were interviewed were cases of contractors who established relationships with particular organisations and obtained their work through those organisations rather than directly from clients. As one person involved in this approach put it, such sub-contracting arrangements had pros and cons. While in the negative these arrangements narrowed one's opportunities and made one dependent on particular organisations, on the positive side they eliminated concerns over finding work, ensuring payment, engaging others, and managing larger contracts.

Other variations were apparent in how contractors connected with work and clients. While some did maintain a focus on sub-contracting or direct contracting, many combined clients from both categories. These people sub-contracted to organisations as well as having their own clients directly engaged. Though the balance between sub-contracting and direct contracting clearly varied on a case-by-case basis, and sometimes shifted over time as the circumstances of the business changed, this combined strategy was a common one for many contractors who were interviewed. Such arrangements could become quite complex as is illustrated by one case. This involved a female interviewee who together with her partner runs a contracting company providing administration services and training. While they gather a great deal of their own contracts directly, they also sub-contract to another organisation to provide a range of services to clients. For one particular contract they employ two people, thus adding the role of

employer to their profile. It is this array of clients or sources of work within one employment role – say as a contractor – that we term portfolios.

Some contractors operated what could be termed closed portfolios – where they worked with a set group of clients and were not seeking out new business. A man involved in the I.T. industry described himself as “not having a huge client base” and he relied on being able to “keep looking at new opportunities within the client base I have and to also hope that one assignment leads to another”. This does not mean that business opportunities that passively arose – say a potential client hearing about their service from an existing client – were ignored or refused. In this man’s case, a few such incidental opportunities emerged from his chairing a regional committee. Given this, it is reasonable to characterise contractors with closed portfolios as not purposefully engaged in broadening their portfolios. This is unlike those with open portfolios. Not only did these people work for particular clients but they were always actively seeking to expand their client base. Creating this distinction between open and closed portfolios should not disguise the fluid nature of contracting. Thus, contractors might have a closed portfolio for periods but when this failed to provide sufficient work they could actively seek to expand their portfolio. This was one option being considered by the man quoted above when it looked as if his current client base would fail to provide him with sufficient work. Alternatively, as was the case for a graphic designer following the birth of her child, portfolios could be closed off for a time to limit the amount of work according to people’s needs or capacity.

The clients that made up a contractor’s portfolio could themselves each be further categorised according to certain characteristics that are appropriately albeit briefly noted at this point. These characteristics are duration, stability, frequency, and quantity. The first two concern client relationships while the final pairing are to do with workflows. Duration refers to the length of time clients had been associated with contractors and stability is related to the nature of that relationship, taking in the reliability or predictability of clients for providing work. Frequency relates to how often a client provided work and the regularity of that work, while quantity is fairly self-explanatory. Not unexpectedly, the interviews revealed a fairly consistent pattern amongst contractors that, given the uncertainty of this type of work, they sought to have a reasonable proportion of their clientele with high values in each of these characteristics.

Many of those working in non-standard ways felt that their work was more intense. This was experienced in a range of ways. For those with more than one job they usually felt that they worked harder in each and that the combined effect was far more than a single job. Even those with a single work role found that they worked more intensely. Not only did this arise from many people working longer hours, it was not uncommon for interviewees to feel they were less distracted and much more focused working this way.

Well you haven’t got the distractions, I suppose. I mean I just sit down and get stuck into it, generally.

I work harder and am more focused.

I try and work faster and smarter all the time.

Consequently they perceived themselves as working more productively and having a greater output compared to the same amount of time as an employee. Their clients, they felt, got excellent value.

We are a lot more productive, a lot more efficient.

If I put in ten hours a day here, that would have easily been a 14 to 16 hour day in the office.

Given that many contractors were balancing a number of pieces of work at any one time, this too could increase the work intensity. Though agreeing that he worked more intensely, one man added that this had always been the nature of the industry he worked in and was not simply a feature of contract work.

Interestingly, since some people felt that their work was much more intense and their output far higher, this impacted on how they charged for their work. As a result, some felt that they needed to work far fewer hours to generate a comparable income as an employee. For one woman, this intensity in one of her jobs as a contract writer for an annual publication, and the manner she was paid, freed up time for other work or more pleasurable activities.

So really this job at the moment, I am probably doing three or four hours a day, and it probably should be full-time. But the thing is that I can get the work done in that time and then it allows me time for doing my other work. And you see one thing that is really important to me is I walk over the fields everyday. I do a big hour and a half walk in the country, I don't do it every day but I do it sort of five days of the week. That's really important to me, so it is important that I have time to do those things.

Though precise details about charging and payment structures were not canvassed, some brief observations can be made about how people valued their time and determined which periods would be charged for. In respect of the former, some people had benchmarks to go by. These were usually associated with groups who were more commonly engaged and well established in contracting. That said, the individual nature of contracting occasionally meant that people were surprised by comparisons with others. For some of those interviewed, the novelty of their service or product created problems determining a rate. A contract worker in the personal social services, for example, indicated that the lack of benchmarks within her profession meant looking at what allied professionals charged. Sometimes contractors were limited by what clients would pay. Issues to do with charging also had implications for time management. These depended on whether the contract was based on an hourly rate or a fee for service. The former meant that people had to maintain a record of billable hours and some people operated a very strict regime for this; others were more relaxed. The latter demanded that people balanced the hours necessary to do the work with achieving a viable return. Either way, the blending and blurring of work with aspects of the person's life (discussed in a later section) often made time accounting difficult.

Countering the more common position regarding the intensification of work was a woman who felt that although the way she worked had changed when she adopted a non-standard approach to working, it had in fact become less intense for her.

It has changed quite dramatically, but less intense. I feel much more relaxed about it. It is sort of like... it's fun. It's become fun rather than being a hard slog. Probably because I

personally like to be in control and this way I can be, whereas when I was employed by somebody else I tend to be less [in] control.

Figure 2 shows the variation in how much more intense people found working in non-standard ways. Clearly a larger proportion of people found their work more rather than less intensified. Some people acknowledged that many of the pressures on them to produce and work hard were self-induced, though this was often seen as part and parcel of being a contractor. As this man observes, the quantity and quality of one's work is vital for continued employment.

Pressure comes from within – when you are working for yourself, you realise you have to do it right.

Anderson et al. (1994) refer to this as the freedom to establish an extraordinary amount of self-exploitation.

This observation is interesting in the context of how the work of contractors was monitored which appeared to be entirely output based – did the outputs meet the agreed objectives in terms of timeframes, quality, quantity, and/or content? These output measures were generally determined at the outset of the contract, though the mechanisms to achieve this varied. Sometimes very formal contracts were established, in other instances less structured letters of agreement or understanding were put in place, while in some cases very informal arrangements were entered into. The nature of agreements varied between businesses and within businesses. This often depended on the nature and strength of relationships and prior work history that people had with clients. One contractor suggested that “being in the consultancy thing has an element of trust in it already”.

The question of monitoring and surveillance is also pertinent for other types of non-standard workers. As with contractors, meeting contract obligations was also the means that the temporary help agency employees we spoke to were monitored. Unlike standard employees, they were not part of regular company-based employee appraisal schemes. Rather, they were employed to fulfil certain functions or projects. In respect of teleworkers, outputs were also used to monitor work. The woman who worked from home used a system of work logs and monthly reporting to record her workflows. Interestingly, though useful for monitoring those working from afar, this was the same system used by standard employees in that company. Importantly, she felt that trust was a critical ingredient.

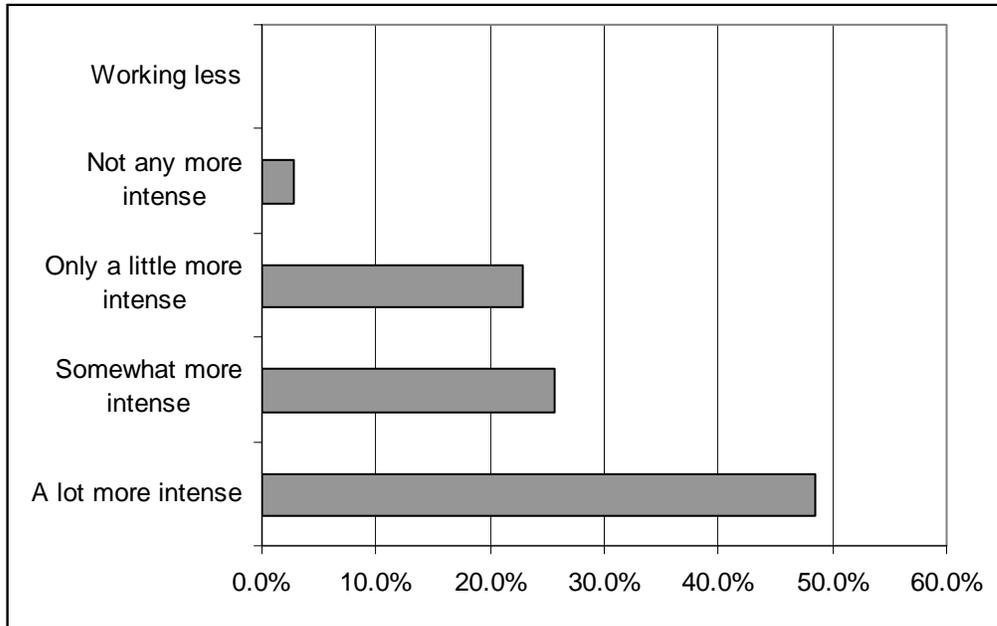
No, nobody is looking over my shoulder. But again I had built up a relationship over a few years with the people I've worked with, and they knew my standards, and it is not something I want to abuse either because I value trust.

The need for trust in alternative working arrangements was reinforced very starkly by the experiences of another teleworker. Though she worked from home, because the office technology was rather poor she still had to visit the company office on a regular basis to drop off work. However, this visit had a secondary purpose.

What I do at the moment is I go and do the interview, I come home, I write it up on my computer, I save it to disk and I take that disk into work. ... I do a couple of hours work, I will drive into the city, put my head in the office, reassure my boss that I am working. ... They haven't got an operational computer down there at the moment. I take the disk in.

...[My boss] is someone that thinks everyone is out to rip him off, everyone is trying to get his money, so the fact that I am working from home is such a milestone. I am very careful, just about every day I pop in and say hi and do a little work just to reassure him, I don't say anything but just so he feels safe. I am taking care of his emotions so that's to my benefit.

Figure 2. Changes to Intensity of Working With Moves Into Non-Standard Ways



Contributing to the intense quality of contracting was the very nature of the work. That is, contractors were often brought in for specific tasks or projects because they had particular expertise and the pressure was on them to deliver.

I think perhaps it is intense in terms of having to cogitate things and think about things, and trying to be creative in terms of finding the best solution.

This raises the issue of specialisation which was explicitly discussed by a small number of people but which was also implicit in the comments of others. Essentially, contractors saw themselves as specialists and this could be established in a number of ways. They might, for instance, clearly demarcate their particular realms of expertise. This man, for instance, deliberately based his business on the strengths and contacts he had.

I probably took the safer option by looking for contracts and just delivering on whatever the contracts in the area of what I am capable of, rather than going in and set up foreign corp. or service and try and market it with the customers.

Alternatively they could establish key points of difference between themselves and other similar contractors.

Here's the interesting thing – when we started the company we thought the company was going to be a research company. But it turns out that there are lots of research companies, and if all you are doing is buying standardised research products then there is no point of differentiation. And why would you buy it from me as opposed to somebody else? Very early on we were getting exposed, even though we didn't know that we were getting exposed, to a marketing discipline which was, "What is your point of difference?" Which is all around conceptualization and understanding and thinking about applied research, managing research, developing your research, applying research, making sense of all your research.

Finally, people's businesses might be built on innovative approaches to doing what others do.

We just read a lot, get a lot of things from overseas and actually try and apply everything in our jobs. If we see something new, we will try and build it and do it and use it. We are not afraid to do things like that, just always trying to be, I guess, the leading edge of what we do. Because we realise that we have to be quite an innovative technical company that is always up with the play of what it does, and we can be flexible.

Regardless of the strategy that was adopted it was seen as important to be clear about the nature and limits of the company's expertise with clients. One proviso regarding specialisation appears to be that when businesses were starting out they tended to be less specialised. In response to the anxieties and uncertainties of embarking on contracting people were willing to take on any work that provided an income. As they became established they then opted to focus on their specialist areas.

Being able to specialise and work intensely were two factors in a sense of work enrichment that some contractors felt. This was likely to also be the outcome of having more variety in, and control over, one's work. Variety was a factor for contractors and those with more than one work role.

The variety is great and I want to be able to keep maybe two, three contracts going at any one time so that I have got that variety.

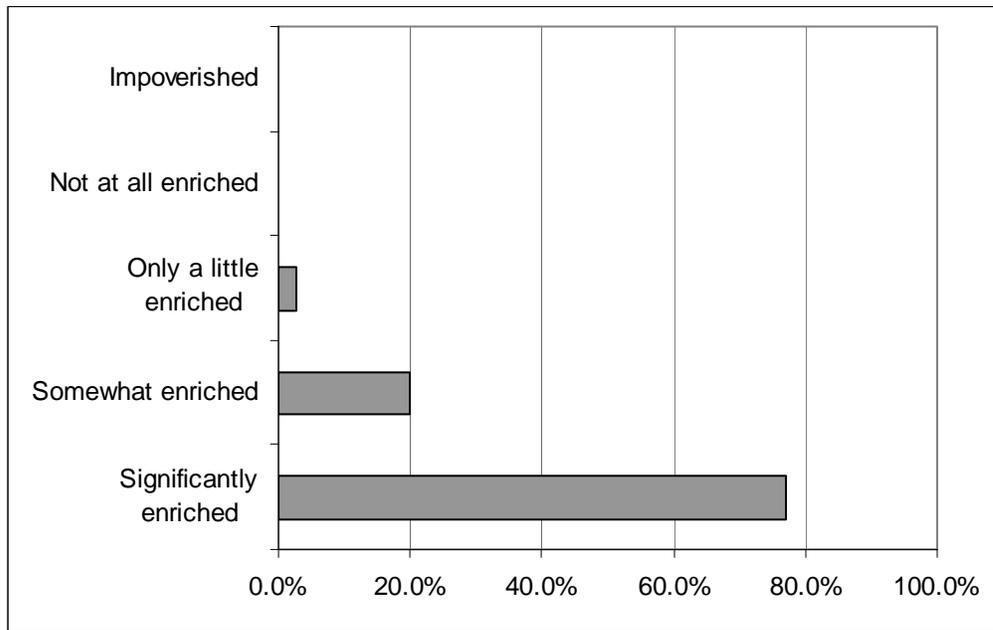
Figure 3 shows the degree of work enrichment that interviewees perceived, with most experiencing much richer work than when they were employed in standard arrangements. In contrast, though some people found being able to work independently also enriched their work, one person felt that, though she loved the lifestyle of working as a contractor, her work was impoverished somewhat by having to work alone. The marked degree of enrichment that almost all those interviewed experienced can be clearly seen in Figure 3.

Despite the need to specialise, contractors also found that they needed a wide range of other skills and abilities. When they worked for large companies, people could rely on a range of resources and staff. As well, the reputations of large companies often helped get them work. For contractors, getting business rested on them alone, not only in respect of their efforts to find work but in selling their abilities and providing what was promised. They also had to be better informed about what they were doing, more versatile, and be able to access the people and resources that might be needed to take on work.

Though networks were clearly important in connecting people with others who might have knowledge or expertise they could use, it is also worth considering how contractors more formally engaged others. This was most often achieved through what we term

associations and collaborations, rather than by employing staff in the traditional manner. This is discussed in Chapter 12.

Figure 3. Perceptions of How Work Has Been Enriched by a Move Into Non-Standard Employment



6. Managing Alternative Working Arrangements

There is a certain degree of predictability in standard employment arrangements that condition not only the paid work aspects of a person's life, but other areas as well. This is absent or weakened in non-standard arrangements which has implications for the organisation of a person's paid work, and the relationship of that to their personal life as the construction of time and space is changing. This section explores how people organised their work, given that an external structure was absent or certainly weakened, and how their way of working interacted with their relationships, responsibilities and activities in the private sphere. It is initially structured around the organisation of time and space. As well, for those who balanced more than one role, there is an examination of how people coped with this mix. These sub-sections serve as an introduction to the broader issue of how people managed the home/work nexus in the context of alternative working arrangements.

6.1 Managing Time

A key reason for engaging in non-standard work was the flexibility such arrangements offered, especially in relation to the organisation of time or, 'inter-temporal flexibility' as Mangan (2000:168) calls it. Only a few of those interviewed had little control over the hours they worked, usually because this was driven by the demands of their work. Most of those interviewed experienced varying degrees of time flexibility. This is illustrated in Figure 4. From Figure 4 it is evident that almost all those interviewed had some flexibility. This is almost certainly related to the type of derivative arrangements participants had and the degree of perceived flexibility is perhaps related to levels of skills, expertise and experience. There is a sharp dichotomy between the most and least desired forms of non-standard arrangements (Mangan, 2000:168).

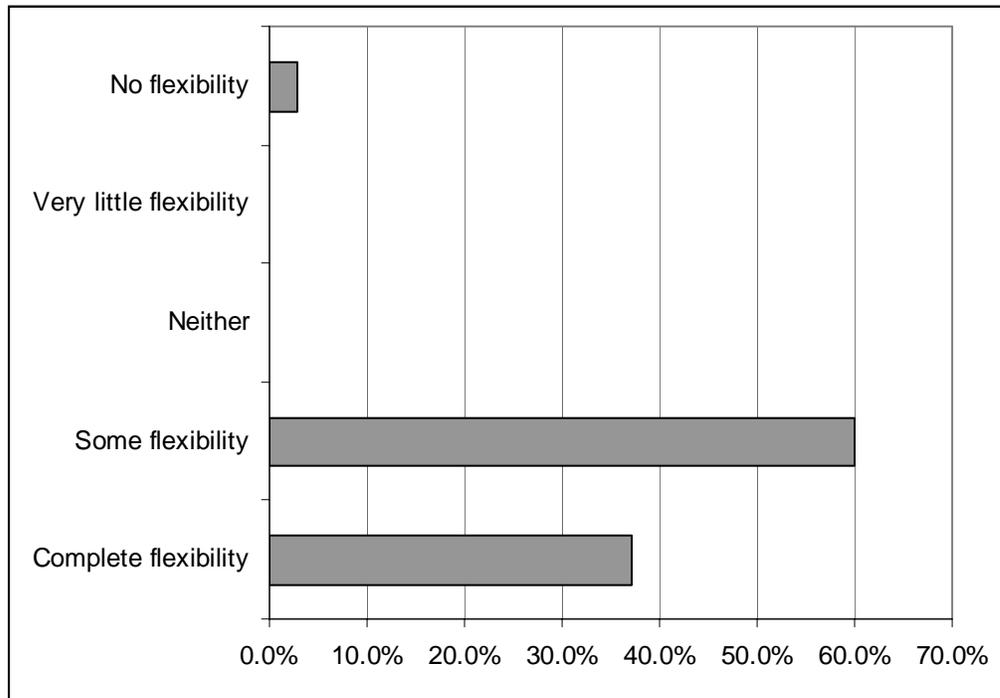
While some of those in alternative working arrangements were subject to set hours, this was not always as restrictive as it superficially appeared. Temporary help agency employees, for instance, often replicated many of the standard employment arrangements. However, it is not an absolute, even for this group, since one of these who was interviewed held a senior management position and she reported still having some flexibility over the hours she worked. Part-time workers often had set hours as well, but the case of a woman who held a part-time teleworking position illustrates that this does not necessarily imply complete inflexibility. Though the hours she worked directly with clients were set, the balance of her work time was unstructured.

Most of those interviewed, therefore, enjoyed some flexibility over the management of their work time, and this was evidenced in a number of ways. At its simplest this involved a sense of choice over when people worked. Despite the desire not to have their working hours set, many people introduced some structure or pattern to their work time and this usually created a workday routine. How strictly they adhered to this differed, with some very rigidly following their timetable and others using it as a guide.

I still work most days - I start at 8.00am and I finish at maybe 6.00pm and then I go home and do another hour at the end of the day.

Another woman who ran her business from home and employed staff had established a 9.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. workday. The later start allowed her some time at home by herself to do things before people arrived.

Figure 4. Degree of Flexibility Over the Hours of Work



Clearly a major factor in the development of such personalised patterns was an individual's rhythms.

Myself, I have my own habits, interestingly enough the same as my partners. We are both morning people, so if I have a project on, I get up at 5.30 in the morning and I will do solid work through until about 8.00am, something like that. ...And then do some more work or actually have to go and see clients or what have you. But that time in the morning for me, happens to be the best time of the day. I know one person who works more at night time, so at the end of the day, I have done as much as I can, I will send that off, I know that I will get an e-mail back at around 1.00 or 2.00am in the morning.

Other people mentioned working more effectively at unusual times. When particularly busy, this woman elected to work very late.

There is a lot of work between 1.00am and 4.00am in the morning. But that is quite good in a way because it is a time when I concentrate quite well. You get on a roll...

Her personal rhythms also meant that,

Sometimes I even sleep in, which is great, because I am not a morning person.

Household or family rhythms can also influence the structuring of time.

I get up at 6.30 in the morning and start work about 7.00am. At 8.00am I take my daughter to school, start again at 8.30am and work through to 5.30 in the afternoon when I go and pick my daughter up.

A staunch advocate of teleworking saw the responsive nature of alternative working arrangements to individual preferences as a key and important feature.

Regularised patterns of working sometimes extended beyond the daily routine. These longer patterns can be conceptualised as cycles. In the case of a woman who ran a company in the IT sector, for example, her cycle was weekly. It was the outcome of having to care for two small children and was made possible by having staff and a manager. She worked in the office two full days a week, and had devoted one day, without interruptions, entirely to her children. For the remainder of the time she balanced the two by working from home, often in the evenings and at weekends, as well as keeping in contact with the office when at home. In another case, the cycle stretched over several weeks with the man working for a couple of weeks on a project and then committing a similar period to study. The type of contract work he did, which involved business evaluations, usually overseas, was well suited to this approach. Of course the demarcations were not absolute, with study filling the downtimes (such as plane travel) during the work phase, and some aspects of work bleeding into study time. This bleeding and blurring was a feature that sometimes made it hard to determine what was and wasn't work time. It is explored more extensively when the work/home nexus is discussed. The cycles of work for one woman had an annual pattern to them since the work she did was partly based on education semesters.

The pattern I seem to find happening is that for the first part of the year I don't have a lot of work and then the second half of the year it cranks up to three, sometimes four days a week.

As she was studying full-time as well as working, this imbalance meant she could devote more time to study in the first half of the year but was more pressured later.

The most common factor affecting the structuring of time was the variable demands of workflows. As will be discussed more fully in the section on disadvantages, uncertainty was a prominent feature of non-standard work, particularly, though not exclusively, for contractors. This meant that there was an unpredictable quality to how much work people would have at any time. Consequently, they often had quiet periods and very busy periods. These could be exacerbated by people not wanting to turn work down, and by some contracts having very tight timeframes. Both created periods of high demand and stress. Thus, evening and weekend work was not unusual for this group though people had varying attitudes to this. Some saw it as simply a fact of life for this type of work while others preferred to work at these times only when absolutely necessary. Few if any could escape having to work in the evening or on weekends on some occasions.

Another factor that influenced the degree of weekend or evening work related to how people made use of time flexibility. If they wanted the freedom to use normal business hours to do things besides work, then the work had to be allocated to other times. This

was often the outcome of their balancing personal or domestic circumstances with paid work. The earlier case of the woman caring for two children clearly illustrates this. It is explored more fully in the later section. In summary, then, people enjoyed, and made use of, a flexible approach to managing their work time. This usually featured some framework that emerged out of their individual preferences, but which was also a reflection of the vagaries of work flows and their personal circumstances.

In opening up all sorts of business possibilities, technology also played a part in influencing the management of time. The experiences of a woman, who managed an IT company, nicely demonstrates this. Her business provided sales and service for specialist software and catered to the Asia-Pacific region and thus had to have staff available during business hours in the countries where their product was being used. This meant people had to work outside normal business hours and over holiday periods. The outcomes were not always desirable.

Last year, we were only dealing with New Zealand and yes; we got that week between Christmas and New Year, because the whole of New Zealand basically shuts down. We had one of my staff that had a cell phone, and we didn't get a single call. This year we are catering for the whole of Asia and a lot of them don't close for Christmas, so our expectation is not going to be that we will have that same luxury this year. We will have a skeleton staff on, but we will still cover the key areas.

But there could be positive spin-offs.

We offer [support] from 8.00am New Zealand time to 5.00pm Singapore time. It means that our staff have been more flexible with their hours. I have staff here that are very much in contact with Japan for example, and he works two evenings a week because it fits in with his lifestyle. He has a wife who has her own business and again a young family and he has been able to come to me and say, we need a bit of flexibility, because it suits us as well. It works really well both sides.

For the owner of the business it also meant that her responsibilities were extended in time, regardless of what she was doing or where she was.

6.1.1 Managing Time-off

For those in many alternative forms of work being sick and having a holiday could be problematic. Our interview group was fairly evenly split between those who found organising time off difficult, at the least, and those who managed this reasonably well. It should be added that some of this latter group did so with some provisos. A small number sat somewhere between these two groups. These people generally managed short breaks, readily running a line through the diary for a couple of days to go skiing or the like, but struggled when it came to longer periods of time off.

While many of those interviewed would readily acknowledge the importance of having time off, it seemed that being able to organise this was much harder. Indeed, for a couple of people the difficulties meant that the whole notion of holidays made no sense any longer as they only created additional stress. However, a small group found that just as their alternative employment arrangements had positively changed their views of work, so too had they changed their perceptions regarding holidays. Though she enjoyed short breaks, one woman found she needed fewer long breaks.

I find, also, that because of the variety of work that I am doing, I don't feel the need for that great big two week 'get-away-from-it-all'. I don't feel so trapped in the same old thing, which was the case when I was an employee.

Intriguingly, one woman felt it was better to do exactly the opposite.

You have to stop things when you go [on holiday] so it is better to do a long one rather than lots of little ones.

Another woman, who worked intensely for short periods on writing assignment, always structured in breaks during those periods and between assignments.

I don't need holidays, because I am having time off [during the day and week], walking everyday, having time when I'm not doing business, there is no big need for holidays.

A contract she currently was working on also involved overseas travel. She saw this as a mix of work and pleasure. For those who had travelled as part of their work, it was not uncommon for breaks to be tacked onto such trips. Alternatively, holidays might have some business tacked onto them! These very idiosyncratic responses to the idea of holidays emphasise the individual character of these business arrangements and the people who ran them.

For contractors, two main issues can be seen in relation to having time off. Firstly, when they are not working they are not earning, so taking breaks means having to budget for them. Secondly, difficulties around taking time off are intimately tied to their main concern in working as contractors, the uncertainty. Any period of time when they are unavailable for work could, they felt, have detrimental effects on their business since they might not be around to hear about, or take on, work that came up. Similarly, they might have to turn down offers of work that coincided with periods when they were away. This had immediate and future implications since a refusal of work might mean no further offers from that client. As well, after returning from a holiday work had to be re-established and/or people might have to catch up on work that they had fallen behind on. For these various reasons they preferred either not to take time off or they planned heavily for this.

Such preparations included selecting times that were quieter. Thus, Christmas/New Year was a common time for breaks even if it was not desirable in other respects. Contractors also let regular or established clients know they would be away. They sometimes remained in contact with the business while on holiday. This again raises the question of whether the notion of holiday had also changed with working arrangements. As well, people liked to have work arranged for their return. Not doing so was of major concern to one interviewee when he came back from a holiday.

There is a risk in particular when you don't have work lined up for when you come back. Recently I went to the States for a few weeks with my family ...from a work point of view it was a disaster and I was quite anxious about the fact that I was leaving. For the first time I was going away and did not have work lined up for when I came back.

Factors that eased the holiday problem were having partners who could assume responsibilities while individuals were away. Employing staff or having reliable sub-contractors was similarly helpful. Those people who were themselves sub-contractors,

dependent contractors, or who had very settled client bases often managed to more easily arrange time off. Perhaps it was the strength rather than nature of various relationships that was more important. It also seemed that like so many other aspects of alternative work arrangements, holidays were more difficult in the early phases of running a business.

Where households contained people who were both contractors, co-ordinating holidays could be even more problematic. Often, similar difficulties applied when one of the spouses or partners was in standard work arrangements.

[My partner] and I have never had a holiday together on my work time. Mainly because of her job, more than mine. ...We keep planning but [in the industry she works in] things start and finish very abruptly and they don't get holidays and days off. That's more of the problem.

That said, similar problems could just as easily arise for two people in a relationship who are employees.

Coping with sickness posed similar problems and additional ones as well. Since this was usually unpredictable, strategies aimed at planning and preparing for time away from work were not possible to the same degree. Fortunately our interviewees seemed a very healthy group and managing illness had not been an issue for many. Certainly, there was the sense that the threshold for time off from work due to sickness was much higher. For those caring for children, managing time off when they were sick was demanding and took people away from their business activities. Unlike being able to work through a period when they personally felt unwell, caring for others could not always be integrated with work. It was also out of their control.

6.2 Managing Space

Two broad categories can be discerned in relation to where people worked. Firstly, there were those who worked solely at their employer's or client's workplace. For this group, the alternative facets of their employment centred on hours, tenure and/or employment relationships rather than location of the work. This group was made up of almost entirely of employees though two contractors, due to the nature of their work, had to be located on their client's site. One was involved in stage and concert lighting and the other in film post-production.

Secondly, there were those people whose alternative arrangements included where they worked. This group comprised some employees, such as the part-time employee who worked at her client's office but managed her relationship with her employer by teleworking from home. However, the majority of this group was contractors and those with a mosaic of contracting and a role as an employee. They, in some way, used their home as a workplace. The prominent place of the home is further reinforced by the fact that even the handful of contractors who maintained a separate office for their business, also worked to varying degrees from their homes.

Given the predominance of home-based workplaces among those interviewed, the concerns of one woman about working from home diminishing the professional image of her business seem unnecessary. Indeed, she found this to be unimportant to those she dealt with. A couple of people did note that the geographical location of their homes meant that if their office was located there then it could be isolated from other commercial activities or difficult for clients to visit.

Where people worked was often based on domestic or personal preferences (as will be seen in the section on the work/home nexus), on the nature and demands of their work and particular projects, or a combination of both. Having the choice of working from home reinforces the flexibility inherent in alternative working arrangements. Where home and work were in some way integrated, the degree of this varied. A few people were located in each of the extremes of home/office integration where they either used their home exclusively as their workplace or the home office was utilised in very limited ways and times, most often for administering the business rather than conducting core activities. Most contractors, however, spent time working from both their homes and client's premises though the balance between the two varied on a case by case basis¹⁶.

Contractors might spend time on client's premises for many reasons ranging from conducting their work on-site through to visits, meetings and other liaison-style activities. Some of the issues that people confronted in working in client's offices are explored in the section on *Insider/Outsider Relationships*. From a practical perspective people often found themselves working in a hot-desk situation. That is, since they were not employees they were not allocated a space but used whatever was free. Others managed almost permanent office space. Like the insider/outsider relationship, factors such as the length and nature of the contract, the relationship between contractor and client, and the attitudes of client employees could affect the allocation of space.

Technology often facilitated being able to work from home. In one case a business with four partners, all of whom worked from their homes, maintained a virtual office. This was achieved by such things as having the company telephone number connected to an answering service that passed calls to their individual cell phones and all being connected to a network server. A wider discussion of the role of technology is undertaken elsewhere in this report.

6.3 Managing a Work Mosaic

Particular challenges arose for the group of people managing more than one work role. This might encompass two employee roles or a combination of contracting and an employee position (see Table 6, page 26). Managing a mix of roles often hinged on one role allowing for some flexibility to better accommodate the other. This might be in terms of the hours worked, the timing of that work, or where it occurred. When this was not

¹⁶ The term premises is deliberately used in that some people visited clients at their homes and not only workplaces, while the notion of client in this sense can be extended to include other firms or organisations that contractors sub-contracted to.

possible, one role usually suffered or additional demands were placed on the person and their personal life was affected. For one woman, managing two part-time jobs that added up to more hours than a single full-time position was quite demanding.

I don't know whether it is just I am older, but with the part-time work, sometimes there is a bit more juggling and it is easier, I find it easier to get a bit tired.

Consequently she was now reluctant to add to her workload by doing occasional acting assignments, something she had previously been more frequently involved in. Regardless of the circumstances, the most general observation regarding combining roles was that it was a juggling act that demanded a great deal of those involved. Though his comments refer to not only managing a mosaic of more than one role but also coping with a wide portfolio of work within certain roles, this man's observations highlight the nature of this juggling act.

There is a seductive element to it, that you get to be a bit excited at your own capacity to keep all the glass balls in the air at the same time. There is a kind of adrenaline rush to that as well. You get quite good at multi-tasking and having lots of things on board at once which is quite exciting. But it is a bit dangerous because you can end up kind of running on adrenaline and then realise that there is absolutely nothing else in your life other than working.

6.4 Managing the Home/Work Nexus

From the preceding discussion it is readily apparent how many non-standard work forms generate more frequent and diverse interactions between work and home. Clearly, there is a greater blurring and blending of home and work life. When the vexed question of "what is work" is added to the mix, the boundaries become even less distinct.

We always have this debate, what is work? If I was selling cars it is pretty obvious what is work, I turn up I go to the yard, I sell cars, I come home and I am not working anymore. We are writing a book at the moment on knowledge. ...I will go home, and if I read a [related] book ... is that work? Even if I sit down and start writing, and I really like writing, is that work? Even if there is a dollar attached to that, does that count as work? And if it is only ever work when it feels like work, then it's hardly ever work. We talk in the beginning about blurring of distinctions and the hardest one for me is actually working out what work is. It is particularly difficult when you do what we do because, lets say we work 50-60 hours a week and that varies all the time, we might only charge out a third or a half of that, so you can't even say what you charge out is work because the subsidy of what we do is chargeable. Then there is some other stuff that is legitimate work and there is other stuff around the periphery of that which directly influences and impacts upon our work that you would never charge.

It is not hard to imagine from these comments that some of that "stuff around the periphery" might get done in all sorts of places and at all sorts of times. Though her integration of work and personal life was far greater than that of almost anyone else, this woman's experiences illustrate just how blurred life and work can become.

My work and my passions and my interests and hobbies are all spent doing the same things. Most of my friends are like activists, strategists and schemers so that's how we spend our spare time. ...When some friends who don't sort of understand my life say you have got to have a break from your work, it's like having a break from your life. I work every day, it might be even the books that I read, even the fiction that I read. I have always got my eyes scanning for ideas with everything, even conversations that you have it's like oh that is a

good idea and you make a mental note, it is a never ending process really. I never know the boundaries. I won't be at my computer at 8.00am and at 5.00pm be in the kitchen.

While most people had much greater separation between work and their personal life, as the following discussion highlights, non-standard work creates wonderful possibilities in combining work and home but similarly generates significant challenges in finding a balance between the two.

At this point we can reintroduce the concept of a life-work mosaic since the home/work nexus represents the relationship between the home and work segments of that mosaic. The blending and blurring spoken of above can be visualised in terms of the joins between various pieces from the home and work segments. These joins are far from the clear and distinct boundaries that are possible in the construction of mosaics. Rather, pieces closely abut one another, though where blending occurs that is problematic in some way, the join may not be symmetrical. Larger, messier and asymmetrical joins represent the more significant clashes that occur between home and work activities.

It is important at the outset to note that where home and work are more closely integrated, the effects of one on the other can occur in both directions. It is easy to see how work can affect home-life.

We have for example in the last two weeks had some major deadlines where both of us have been working very hard and have just had to have constant childcare, even when we have both been working at home we have needed somebody here just to make sure the baby is okay.

But the reverse can just as readily occur, as this simple example show.

You tend sometimes to be disturbed when you are working from home ... my children may need help with their homework or something.

It is not just having an office physically part of the home that creates blurred boundaries between one's personal and working life. Technology plays a part as well.

I often get 20 phone calls at home, and I find that quite disturbing.

I have also got a mobile and I hate the bloody thing because it is never people ringing up to ask me to go to a party, it is always crises or demands.

Because I am home based it can be a bit invasive to the home life. That means for example that my fax was going at 10.30 - 11.30pm last night, not that that is a major problem, but it would wake you up if you happened to be in bed. With the phone there is a separate line which I only answer between the hours of 9.00am to 5.00pm. But that is the same, it can ring on and off during the night as well.

Although the issues arising from the home/work nexus were most often incidental to the shift from non-standard work, in a couple of cases the decision to make this transition was based on the desire or need to find work that suited other responsibilities. Thus, some businesses were started and managed in order to be able to care for children and engage in some paid work. In one case the woman was able to develop a small computing based business when her daughter was born prematurely. This was a continuation of work she

had been doing as an employee prior to the birth. After a marriage break up, another woman was looking for home-based work that would fit in with her childcare commitments. She was able to secure a contract managing a loyalty programme from her home. The first foray into non-standard work by one man was also prompted by needing to engage in paid work and provide childcare while his wife was involved in full-time study.

Once children were born, often women adapted their existing non-standard work arrangements in order to accommodate childcare responsibilities. This combination of paid and unpaid responsibilities reflects the flexibility inherent in many non-standard working arrangements but not possible or easily achieved in standard work. In the following example the woman was able to integrate caring for her two children with running a business that employed 11 staff. Though she had the help of a nanny for some periods of the week, at other times she achieved the balance between home and work by managing how, where and when she worked – that is the structuring of time and space.

I have two little children, a 2-year-old and an 8-month-old. I fitted that in around the business, which has been quite good, it's neat that I have been able to be flexible with my hours. ... I have tried to put a little bit of structure into my week because of my children and I need them to have some sort of continuity. ... I come in [to the office] two full days a week and then work the odd evening or weekend depending on how busy we are. ...I always have one day a week that I don't do any work whatsoever. That has been a conscious decision. It is a weekday on a Thursday; I just don't work at all. I make a conscious decision, I turn the phone off, I take my kids out and do things with them. ...I often work at night, I will often come back to work in the evenings after the kids are asleep and my husband's home. ... Having the technology we have means that you can take your work home...

Another woman cut back her work commitments when her child was born. Even so, as her comments reveal, the reorganisation of time and tasks can be complex and fragmentary.

She is in kind of a routine but not fully yet. So I am always on edge a bit as at the first sound of a cry I know I'm going to need to feed her. ...I don't like to leave her to cry, so as soon as she starts to cry I've got to go and start preparing which means instantly dropping everything I'm doing. So the last five months have been very stop start, stop start.

On top of caring for children, people's businesses still had to be run. Consequently, women often worked whenever they could and at all sorts of times to get tasks completed thereby placing additional demands and stresses on them. As we saw in an earlier quote, this was the case, even for the woman who employed staff. Other women experienced similar competing demands.

Ten hours a week I am out on the road, undertaking the assessments. Then I have to type out the report, do the agency contract, referrals, all the paperwork, all the follow-up, which I do at home when [my daughter] is asleep, which if I am lucky is two hours a day. Plus, if I am really stretched, I do it in the evenings as well. And some weekends when [my husband] is home

Obviously, time dedicated to, or available for, work was often very sparse and very precious. So much so, that one of the interviews was arranged when the woman's daughter was up and about so as not to impinge on her rest times when the mother caught up on her paid work. The negative effects of such demanding lifestyles need not just be

felt by the parents. One man realised that by trying to manage too many things his son's life had become a mirror image of his own chaotic existence.

The shitty thing about it was that [my son's] life at four [years old] was starting to resemble mine. At one point he was going to a caregiver one or two days a week, a crèche one day a week and I was trying like hell to try and take him to kindergarten three afternoons a week as well. But I could never sort of get there half the time. And he was spending a lot of time at my mother's which he likes. The thing was that his social network was all screwed up too.

While their choice of non-standard work arrangements may not have been entirely premised on how these matched domestic responsibilities, most of the men chose to make this shift in part because it allowed them to have a different involvement with family. This was evident in comments like this one from a number of men.

For the kids particularly, I enjoy being part of their life. Being here when they come home from school.

This finding is contrary to that of Wajcman et al. (cited in Aitken et al., 1996) who suggested that men, unlike women, became less family-orientated after telecommuting than before they began.

Having the ability to mix and mingle work and home responsibilities was very attractive to some people.

If you are not busy you can go off and do the washing and get your chores done instead of sitting around at your workplace and then having to spend time on your chores in the evening.

One woman even reported that she devoted her mental energies to thinking about work while she was physically engaged in the household chores.

As has been signalled elsewhere, the difficulties balancing work and home could be exacerbated when both partners or spouses were engaged in non-standard work and each was struggling to cope with the unpredictable workflows. One person even noted how isolated from each other it is possible to be even though you are working from the same location. Alternatively, some people saw greater opportunities for sharing childcare and the like when both had alternative working arrangements.

Certainly the more that [my husband] works from home, obviously the more we see of him. It makes things more flexible for me. There have been times when I have said, "Oh you will be home on Wednesday, well you can whip out and pick the boy up from kindergarten." And that means that I can do something else which enables me to not have to worry about getting home.

While a number of those interviewed favourably viewed the interaction between home and work, most had mixed feelings and experiences. Consequently they enjoyed the benefits and positive aspects but were challenged by the costs and negative outcomes. The common responses to these challenges were to identify the need for balance between home and work and to construct some boundaries by introducing limits and/or structures. Routines were one mechanism that people used to create some temporal separation or

sense of order. Rules also served as a means to bring some order to the mix of home and work.

The odd one might ring at 7.30am and leave a message, I just don't pick up until 8.30 am or 9.00 am.

With the phone there is a separate line which I only answer between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm

I've got a mobile which I keep permanently turned off because I don't actually want to talk to anyone, but I use it to collect messages from people who I don't want to give my home phone number to.

In physical terms people who worked at home also tried in various ways to create boundaries. This usually meant having a dedicated workspace and people talked of the need to have this well set up. Occasionally, though, in a couple of cases work literally flowed into communal areas of the home. In two cases, people's homes not only became where they worked but also where their employees were based. In one of these the business was located in a separate building but the other operated from inside the house. Interestingly, in the latter case the woman was looking to move houses. Rather than use this as a reason to establish the business elsewhere, so important was the working from home concept to her that she was taking the needs of a larger home-based workspace into her considerations. Since she did not feel that she had the work-home balance quite right yet, she was looking for a home that allowed a more distinct split between the two. In a couple of cases people liked to construct a sense of 'going to work' even at home.

When you are working at home you are working by yourself. You have nobody to talk to etc and hence I put the office down here in the back of the garage. So when I walk out of the house I'm out of the house and I start work and I very seldom go back upstairs.

For others, the divisions could be managed less literally. In short, as one of the woman summarised it, a key attribute for people working in non-standard ways,

Is being able to manage your space between work and home, and know where the difference is. And be conscious that you are not actually carrying on working all the time.

She uses the idea of space in a literal and figurative sense.

Another influential factor in relation to managing the difficulties of a blended home and workplace was the make up of a person's personal life. Those without partners or spouses and those without families or whose children were grown up recognised that it was much easier to cope with the blurred boundaries between work and home. Inherent in these observations is the fact that overcoming these difficulties was achieved by allowing work to take precedence.

No family, no relationship, no children. Sometimes I wonder if I am working so hard because I have got that gap in my life or what comes first. I think in a way that probably I do fill up my time with lots of work because I don't have any relationship commitments.

Though not impacting on others, this imbalance still creates problems for the person.

I would really like to have a relationship but I've really got to try and work things out a bit better so I've got some time to put into one. Because at the moment I think I haven't got the

time to sort of socialise and meet people and also it takes a lot of time and energy to put into a new relationship as well.

In another case, this young man's health and his involvement in other activities were affected during the early stages of a business he started with some friends.

[Initially] I thought this will be great: I can work from then to then and then do my sport, and then work all night. ... In the first eight months it hasn't actually panned out that well. ... I was really run down a while ago, absolutely wrecked. I had been working 16 and 17 hour days plus trying to fit in five hours of sport and I was doing it but it was difficult you know. ... In the end I was needing to work through the time allocated for my sport.

To meet the challenges inherent in managing work and home people sought to get a balance in their lives.

I think it is essential because you need to treat yourself holistically to keep the quality of your work up to standard because I really feel that getting to workaholism mode like I have been in the last three months is not good for your mental health and emotional health and I think that at the end your work suffers.

This was the primary reason for one woman opting for alternative working arrangements.

A long time ago I decided I wanted my life to be work/play. I wanted a flow between them both. I didn't want work, I have done that. I remember being in paid employment and I remember thinking, its like you get 100 units of energy everyday and if I use up 90 units of energy on my job, then I have nothing left for my own projects in my life. I was quite clear that I wanted this flow between work and play.

Achieving this was a process that often took time, and was more difficult at the beginning of a business or when changes occurred.

So it's just a little bit of ... you give and take a little bit on both sides of your life. Your personal life and your business life, and you kind of find a balance. That has been very, very hard, it is very difficult, especially since I have had my second child. It has been very hard to find a balance.

In general terms there was the sense that these new working arrangements perhaps required a rethinking of the approach to managing the home-work nexus. Since, in many cases, this interaction was unavoidable and very much part of working this way, it seemed that perhaps people needed to work with it rather than fight it by trying to re-impose the divide inherent in standard work. For instance, some people enjoyed being able to move between home and work tasks as a means of having a break from one area. Even the woman quoted above, who felt being able to demarcate between home and work was a critical skill, adopted this approach.

[It] is so much less stressful because I am making my own decisions ...[in standard work] you have to work within the confines I suppose of an organisation, whereas with this if I wanted to work through to 10.00pm at night I am quite happy to. But if I want to take a half-day through the day I can.

The earlier quote from the woman with very indistinct boundaries (if any at all) between her work and personal life illustrates the extreme of this acceptance. More generally the strong impression permeating many of the interviews was that the weakening of the boundaries between work and home was often appealing to the people who had chosen to work in non-standard ways and necessary to some degree for working this way. This was

not just in the physical sense of having an office in the house, but rather in always being close to what they were working on, a reflection perhaps that the businesses were very much interwoven with and dependent on the people who ran them. It may also have been a reflection of the unsettled and unpredictable nature of this form of work, itself the result of the uncertain workflows and consequent heavy and diffuse demands on people's time and energy that characterised contracting in particular.

In closing this section we want to briefly make some comparisons between the contractors interviewed in this study, and another group of self-employed people interviewed as part of an earlier phase of the LMD (see Shirley et al., 2001a; 2001b; 2001c; Firkin, 2001). This earlier group included some professional and trades people who ran small businesses and whose experiences can be compared to those who were interviewed as part of this study and who ran enterprises of similar size and structure. While the trades people were more often home-based – not unlike the contractors in this study who frequently opted to work out of their homes – the more traditional professionals in the earlier research worked from separate premises. Being home-based, the trades people often made extensive use of their spouse or partner to assist with running the business. However, despite most of the contractors in this study also working from home, no similar involvement by spouses or partners – in either nature or degree – was evident unless they were formal business partners. This mirrors the professionals from the earlier study but the limited involvement of their families was likely inhibited by the siting of their businesses outside the home. Regardless of where their businesses were situated, both tradespeople and professionals relied heavily on their partners and spouses to perform the bulk of unpaid activities. In contrast, many of the contractors interviewed as part of this research were motivated, at least in small part, to work from home so that they could be more actively involved with their families. Finally, though the earlier study only included a small number of self-employed women, their experiences of integrating business and family responsibilities matches quite closely those of women with children in this sample.

7. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Non-Standard Work

The interviews revealed that non-standard work forms create a range of advantages and disadvantages, thereby producing various benefits and costs for those who worked these ways. While occasionally people would identify a key factor on either side of the ledger, most often they identified a mix. Given that the sample contained people in a range of different alternative working arrangements, some effort will be made to explore the positive outcomes for the different categories.

7.1 Advantages

The two temporary agency employees had very different perceptions of the advantages of this form of employment, likely the outcome of the type of work they were involved in and the reasons for being engaged in this type of employment arrangement. For one woman, the temporary position she held offered her the only way to gain paid employment. She had been unable to get permanent work that reflected her qualifications and experience after immigrating to this country with her family. She also hoped it would lead to her getting full-time permanent work either via this position becoming permanent or through the experience and work history it generated. Soon after she was interviewed the former did occur. In the other case, the woman had opted to move into work mediated by a temporary help agency when the company she was working for experienced some difficulties. She worked at a senior level in the IT sector and had been attracted by the high income levels that temporary work offered. She later found that it also offered flexibility and freedom, and an interesting variety of stimulating work. Interestingly, though she worked in companies and offices, she maintained her status as an outsider so as to avoid becoming embroiled in office politics. The various advantages this woman identified mirrored those found by many of the self-employed.

Two other people maintained alternative working arrangements as employees only. One woman, who worked part-time and had a teleworking arrangement, saw obvious benefits in that this allowed her to combine paid employment with the care of her child while requiring limited outside assistance with that care. She was also pleased to be able to maintain the benefits and protections of being an employee. This was quite important for any later move back into full-time work with the company. In the other case the woman combined a part-time position with a casual job, though the latter had quite regular hours. This created a variety to her employment that one job alone couldn't provide and consequently enriched her work. The casual position also allowed her some time flexibility not available had she worked full-time in one job.

We now consider the benefits or advantages that people described for working in some form of self-employment. For the group of contractors who had a work mosaic that included a role as an employee, the clear advantage in this arrangement was that this role provided a steady and reliable income. In most cases, participants earned more money working this way than they might working equivalent hours in traditional employment.

This helped counter the uncertainty of contracting work. As will be apparent in the next section, this was the key disadvantage in working this way.

Self-employment, whether by itself or in conjunction with other roles, provided two core advantages. In each we have drawn together various related themes. The first series of themes are identified under the rubric of flexibility and the second set under the heading of autonomy. Though we will only briefly survey the range and nature of the benefits accrued through having greater autonomy and flexibility in one's work, it is important not to underestimate the very high value placed on these features by those interviewed.

Flexibility and autonomy each had several dimensions and related to both work and personal life with notions such as choice, freedom, control and independence being clearly identified. People particularly enjoyed being able to exercise control over their work lives. Within limits, for instance, they could choose the type of work they did, when and where they did this, and the clients they worked for. They also had high levels of control over how they did the work, as Figure 5 shows, and enjoyed being free from oversight and supervision. Although not all non-standard workers had flexibility over where they worked, as this was often dictated by clients and the nature of work they were involved in, as Figure 6 demonstrates, this was possible for many. It was the flexibility over the management of time that was particularly prized and Figure 4 (page 44) shows the high degree of flexibility in this regard reported by those who were interviewed. When taken alongside the interview material it can be used to establish a higher level of flexibility than they experienced as employees. This is evident in the following quote.

As a self contained consultant you have got a lot of autonomy in terms of the extent to which you can schedule things to your own particular needs or your own preferences.

Greater autonomy and flexibility offered opportunities to better and more creatively integrate paid work with home life. This was obvious from the preceding discussion on *Managing the Home/Work Nexus* and ranged from simple changes that allow a parent to accompany a child to and from school each day, to rather more complex patterns of life and work integration. Such flexibility also stretched to other aspects of time management, say in organising time off (though as was seen, taking holidays is often hugely problematic for many independent contractors).

I will give you an example, last week there was a huge dump of snow in the South Island, 1.5 meters, I go skiing every year, so I put a line through my diary just rescheduled some appointments, got on the plane, went to Christchurch, hired a car and went and skied for four days.

Since much more detailed discussion has already been offered on how people managed the interface between work and home, made all the more prominent and problematic by non-standard forms of work, just two points will be made in relation to the advantages of flexibility and autonomy. Firstly, these factors often served as counterweights to the challenges presented by the home/work nexus and that have already been canvassed. Secondly, though men used these features to allow them to fashion a greater role in domestic activities, it was women with children and the dominant childcare responsibilities who exploited them to their full advantage. This was apparent in an earlier quote. Thus, the flexibility and autonomy that emerged from non-standard

arrangements allowed these women to better manage the competing demands between paid and unpaid work.

Not unexpectedly, higher earnings were an advantage identified by some people, but it was less prominent than the two areas just considered and on a par with many others. An overall assessment of people's earning seems to indicate that, with a couple of notable exceptions, almost everyone was earning a higher hourly return. The return per hour has been chosen since many people had altered their hours of work after changing work arrangements, and so a straight comparison was not accurate. The difficulties in providing an overall assessment of income levels were numerous, especially for newer businesses. In particular it was hard for people to assess income given the fluctuation in workflows. Higher returns could be offset by other negative factors, however, such as the demands and longer hours worked.

Having one's work more directly recognised – both materially and emotionally – was seen by some as a significant benefit. One man drew the interesting comparison, in relation to the more intangible rewards and recognition, between working as an employee and then as a contractor to the same company.

It is extraordinary how you can be doing some work with an organisation one day as an employee and you are in their hierarchy and you are treated as being in that box within the hierarchy and then the next day you change the structure and you are working with the same organisation and you are treated in a totally different way because you are no longer part of that hierarchy. This one has no rank to pull on you and they employ you because they want you. They probably could of stood back and said in fact we employ everyone we have here because we want to, because we need them, they are valuable, but it seldom comes through in an organisation when you are working there.

Other people echoed similar sentiments.

I mean one of the things about working in multiple places like us is that you are kind of getting multiple feedback from lots of sites about your competence and how you're regarded. ...In a [standard] working environment where your competence and ability becomes invisible because it is just assumed. If you are just working for one agency [that sort of feedback] doesn't happen so much. So my experience has been that in doing this kind of work you are generally more valued more of the time and it is really nice.

Another man, who worked as both an employee and a contractor felt that his clients frequently and openly expressed how much they valued his work, whereas there was little positive feedback in the organisation that employed him.

Other benefits that were widely acknowledged included the variety of work that people could take on and the greater enjoyment this generated in one's employment.

The variety is great and I want to be able to keep maybe two, three contracts going at any one time so that I have that variety.

Figure 5. Perception of Autonomy Over How Work is Done

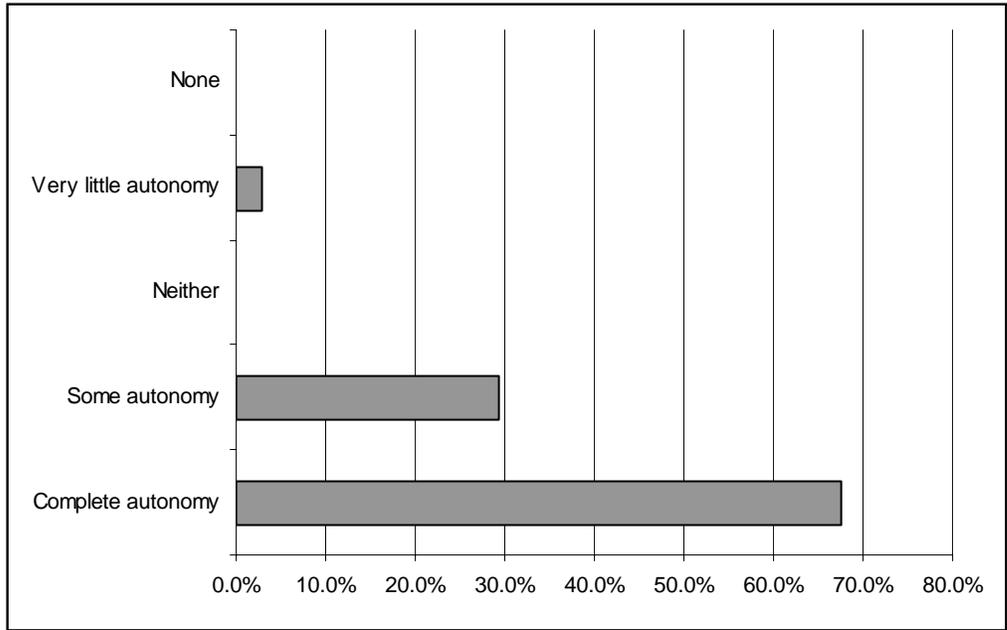
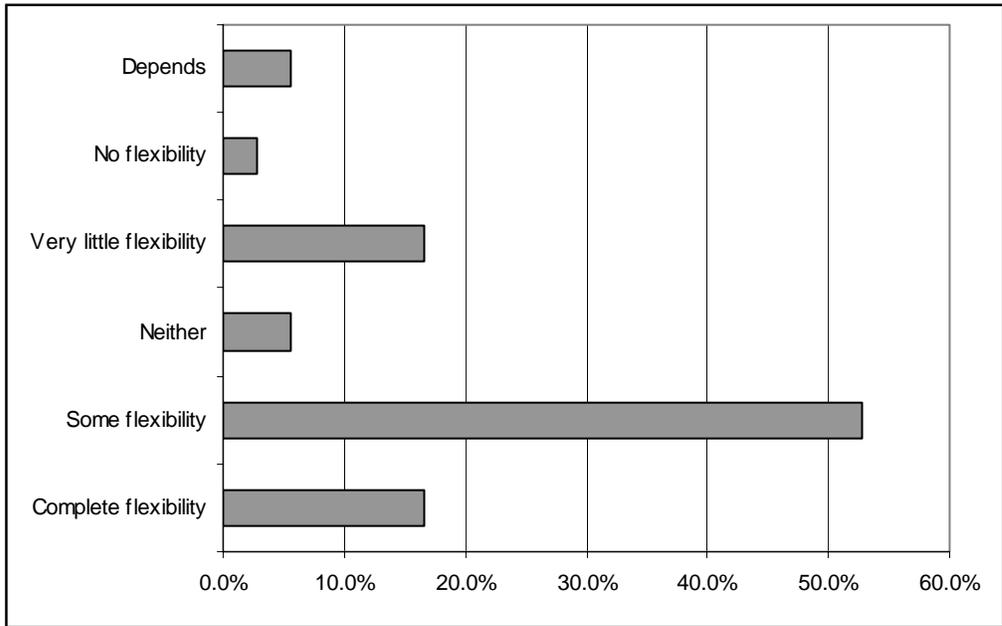


Figure 6. Degree of Flexibility Over Where Work is Done



Aspects of this reflect the enrichment of work noted earlier (see Figure 3, page 42). People also liked the various challenges created by working as contractors from managing the different components or balancing the competing aspects of their

businesses through to meeting the demands of particular projects. They also felt that working as contractors meant they could be more focused on the task in hand. Undoubtedly, the virtues of autonomy and flexibility augmented this as some people talked about working when most productive, energetic or able to concentrate. This was also seen as partly due to them not being employees of organisations with their intrinsic rituals, practises and distractions.

You don't have that, going down the corridor to see if the GM is free and hovering outside waiting for him to finish a phone call and then he rushes off to a meeting. ...You don't have to put up with all that water-cooler gossip and the birthday shouts and all those sort of things.

One woman made an interesting comparison between interruptions as an employee, and as a contractor.

There are less interruptions, but interruptions can sometimes be enjoyable. But it was never as much fun working for someone else, so the interruptions were welcome. Whereas here you are working for yourself which is far more enjoyable, so you quite like working and don't necessarily want interruptions because you so much more enjoy your work.

The lack of distractions was not the only way that people positively evaluated contract employment in relation to being a standard employee. Other frequently mentioned benefits were the savings on time, money and energy in not having to travel to, and dress for, a workplace.

This emerged from being able to work from home, which was another positive aspect for many contractors and though inherent in the earlier discussion on autonomy and flexibility it was more directly acknowledged by some people.

It is really convenient working from home when you are extremely busy because you can just carry on working and do extra hours when you need. I think it is far less physically punishing working from home. Everything that you need is right there, you don't want for anything, if you need to do something else just for a change you can quickly feed the cat or something like that. ...Working from home you are so comfortable and this room that I work in has a wonderful soothing aspect, you are in the comfort of your own home

By not having to be part of workplaces, many people were also very grateful to not have to engage in office politics.

7.2 Disadvantages

Following the above format we first look at the disadvantages noted by those in positions mediated by temporary help agencies and those working exclusively in alternative arrangements as employees. Not unexpectedly, given that the two people in the first category were in very different circumstances so their experiences differ. The woman who had been somewhat forced into the temporary position found the inherent insecurity difficult to cope with.

They first called me only for two or three months but now they are extending my contract. ...It is at the back of my mind that maybe they will tell me that from tomorrow you should not come. ...That is the uncertain thing in my job. That's the main hitch.

She also disliked being an outsider who, regardless of her experience and qualifications, had to start at the bottom on every job. The other woman, who worked in senior IT

management posts, experienced few negatives about this type of work though she recognised it was not for everyone and required a certain temperament and personality. While she saw that the uncertainty could be unsettling she did not worry about it, perhaps given her marketable skills and experience. She also noted that while sometimes large amounts of contract work on a C.V. could be viewed negatively, she felt that it was important to determine the circumstances of that work.

We now turn to the two women in the second category. For the woman who managed a mosaic of two roles as an employee, the difficulties in balancing the time demands of these two jobs was the critical issue. As one of the positions was a sole charge post and required more hours than she was employed to do, it placed additional demands on her and made managing the two roles stressful at times. The woman who had a part-time teleworking position found that being out of the workplace meant she had limited contact with colleagues, which affected her ability to network and keep abreast of what was happening in the company. The relationships she had were narrower and more sterile since they were based predominantly one e-mail and phone contact. She felt that being isolated from the workplace also negatively affected her access to ongoing education and training and her chances of promotion. While the teleworking arrangements created a good fit with her unpaid responsibilities caring for a child, managing the two could be challenging and tiring at times.

In respect of the self-employed, a single factor can be identified as the most commonly acknowledged and strongest disadvantage for those working as independent contractors. Though people gave this various names – insecurity, risk, unpredictability – we have opted to refer to it as uncertainty. Essentially, as these quotes show, this uncertainty referred to the unpredictable and unsettled nature of workflows.

There is an ebb and flow of that sort of stuff. ...There is lots of work and more offers than you can deal with, and then it drops away or changes.

The only thing that I don't like about this is the insecurity. The only thing I don't like about being self-employed is that we never have work that extends more than three months out. Part of me is always thinking what happens if we get to November and the work stops. It hasn't yet, it always keeps coming in but a little part of me deep down thinks, "I don't really deserve this and it might stop".

This, in turn, affected people's income, time off, and ability to plan in various ways.

Yes definitely some insecurity. As I say we have probably been finding that right now. We have been in a position over the last couple of years where we have had too much work. But not now ... because we have chosen to take some time off.

The main disadvantage is really the unpredictability. The fact that you are living on contracts that could be three months, six months, or just until you have finished this piece of work. ...The other unpredictability is that you never quite know how much you are going to earn, because each time you negotiate a contract, you often negotiate a different rate or a different basis, so that is always unpredictable.

Last week I had too many assessments, I had to give four away, and this week I haven't really done much. That is probably my biggest complaint ... Whereas before it was additional money, now we have gotten used to having it, so you start budgeting for it, and when you are not getting it you start to realize that you are not getting it.

While some people intimated that the uncertainty could serve to almost distract them from actually doing their business, more often it was seen as a constant backdrop to their work.

So at any point in time one is doing the work you are doing and looking forward and trying to line up work to cover yourself and so on. Some people saw uncertainty as a driver, an impetus for them to keep working hard

Yeah, it is probably some of that which drives me I think, is security of income, security of job, security of being.

Definitely there is no security there, so you have an insecure feeling that is always there. ...It's risky, but you need to know the risks and you really need to be up with it all the time.

In order to cope with this uncertainty, people adopted a range of strategies. As the above comments suggest, in various ways most people came to accept the uncertainty as a feature of working this way – to ride with it rather than against it, as it were. At the extremes, the comments of some in this regard had a fatalistic quality to them.

You know you think when you finish with one family well what am I going to do but another one always seems to come along.

My friends always say to me, “You will always have work”. ...And all through my career as a journalist, work has just fallen across my path.

Some took the intervention of fate to the extreme. When talking about the uncertainty but acknowledging that work did indeed always ‘turn up’, one woman declared,

I don't know ... trust in the universe. No, I mean that, the universe provides.

For another woman, the emergence of work at difficult times was akin to “magic”, an idea she mentioned a couple of times during the interview.

Often feelings of uncertainty were very pronounced at the outset but moderated as time went on and people succeeded in attracting work.

It was a bit nerve-racking for the first six months, whether it would take-off, but intuition just keep going and optimism started arriving and it has just gone like that. I felt confident that it seemed to be that the market was there.

I guess in the early days there was always a certain worry when things went quiet, but I think we are pretty well established now, work seems to keep coming in.

Initially I was very, very concerned about [the insecurity]. It relaxes ...

As the woman quoted last observed, when her partner also became a contractor, the heightened sense of uncertainty associated with embarking on this form of employment seemed to be almost a rite of passage.

... and it is interesting now because my partner who is also a Director of the company is going through that same thing as well. Having been in employment and being on a salary for most of his working life he is sort of looking at the company and getting into all this risk management stuff and I'm a lot more relaxed about it because it seems to have just worked out over the years.

Sometimes, it seems that the experience of uncertainty was more perception than reality, though this should not be seen as negating its impact. The comments of the same woman are once again useful in illustrating this aspect.

In fact in my first year of self-employment ... I think over the whole of that first year when I actually did an audit of my work there had only been about three or four days when I hadn't had work when I'd wanted it and that was it. Otherwise there was always something coming up.

When drawn together, these factors were one set of reasons why we chose to conceptualise these experiences in terms of uncertainty rather than insecurity. The issue was essentially to do with unpredictable workflows that emerged as a fairly consistent feature of contracting and that most people learnt to manage and/or in some way accept over time (though it seems to never be entirely absent). Occasionally, the sense of uncertainty made some people periodically consider moving out of contracting.

Every now and then I get, you get nervous and start looking at the paper on a Saturday morning, thinking maybe I could apply for that job.

However, the interview revealed that even this woman seemed very unlikely to return to standard employment. As was apparent in the earlier discussion of the return transition, this reluctance was quite common. At most, some of the participants might seek out a settled position as an employee as part of a work mosaic rather than abandon contracting all together. Thus, contractors were usually committed to this way of working, and not insecure as such, but were often uncertain about being able to always maintain a steady and reliable flow of work.

Therefore, it was necessary to find ways to manage this uncertainty. The first aspect of this management was, as implied above, the acceptance of its ongoing presence. This is perhaps what this man was meaning in the following quote.

You also need to take an approach of yes I would really like to do that job and thank you for asking me to quote, so if they don't come back to you then you just leave them, if you appear over-anxious I think that is a problem.

Secondly, since the very nature of this work meant that it could never be eliminated, strategies were adopted that minimised its impact, and we will shortly outline some of these. Such strategies enabled contractors to act and though they might not eliminate the uncertainty, exercising some degree of control means they are unlike insecure employees whose employment vulnerability is outside their control. Extending this idea, some contractors recognised that insecurity was just as rife for employees. One man made this explicit.

All the people I know that have high paid jobs say exactly the same thing, they are worried all the time, they are watching their back, they are watching the young guys come up, they are always nervous

Unlike employees, however, contractors felt empowered to act in relation to this insecurity. Thus, instead of being at the whim of employers, they were in large part reliant on their own resources and efforts.

I think that the fear one has when one is a salary employee, have been laid off or giving up without working, is really unfounded because I think it is actually safer when one works for oneself because you have more control over your business and your income, but as an employee you are subject to the efficiency of the organisation.

This seems a crucial reason for finding an alternative to insecurity that better captures the unpredictability and risks of contracting, but that acknowledges the influence and agency of the contractor in the work process. Our disinclination to employ the idea of insecurity is further reinforced by considering Figure 7 that explores the sense of security in alternative work arrangements that those who were interviewed perceived over the medium and long term. As can be seen, the bulk of people felt secure or very secure working this way in both the medium and long term.

The strategies that people used to cope with uncertainty were various. Principle among them was an approach to working that saw contractors always looking for, and being alert to, new work opportunities – through current client and projects, utilising all manner of networks, and via other sources such as advertisements, calls for tenders and the like.

The uncertainty is difficult, and you do have to really work at that networking to get those contracts to a stage where they are reliable and they do actually come up with the work.

We are conscious that work may not always keep coming in so we do work to some degree on our marketing and getting clients.

People also reported, especially in the early stages of their businesses or when business was quiet, taking on any work that they could do rather than being selective

I tend to end up with odd jobs, which I am more than happy to take on, where other people wont, because of that uncertainly.

During the course of those [early days] we decided even if a [small] project comes up at this stage even though we don't want to be doing it we worked out we would have to do it.

Associated with this was the anxiety over turning any work down. To do so could jeopardise future opportunities with that client. However, taking everything on offer can place different and added demands on people. Some people chose to create a work mosaic by combining their contracting work with some other form of paid employment to cope with the uncertainty though, as we will see, this creates its own set of difficulties. Alternatively, a few people sought to develop other business opportunities to the same end. As one man put it, owning another already established business provided a “passive” income he could rely on.

Occasionally, people could rely on the income of spouses and the like. This helped them overcome the income ups and downs of contracting. That said, as was noted earlier in one of the quotes, even if it is only a secondary source of income in the household, the earnings from contracting can come to be depended on and fluctuations can put stress on the main earner and the household's financial stability.

The mention of spouses raises an interesting point concerning a small number of households where both parties were engaged in alternative forms of work either as joint

partners in the same business or as separate contractors. One woman sums up the double difficulties they face in terms of uncertainty:

My partner is a builder so he hasn't got definite wages either so when you have got two self-employed people it can be up in the air, some weeks we have got thousands and other weeks we have got none.

Isolation was the next most prominent disadvantage identified by contractors. Own account contractors who worked independently and often from a home office most keenly felt this. Indeed, depending on the type of work that people did, they sometimes felt tied to the home, as was the case for a woman providing a range of telephone-based services. A few of those with business partners or who employed others still felt isolated in various ways, since those with partners tended to work by themselves a lot of the time, and some small businesses were set up well apart from commercial areas. One woman made the interesting observation that even in her more general social contact, the nature of independent contracting and the work she did was well outside many people's experience and understanding. Consequently, they tended not to engage with her about her employment, as they would with other more traditionally employed people, thereby adding to the sense of isolation she felt.

In terms of isolation, the most common experience was that people missed the social contact inherent in a workplace.

You miss that throw away conversation over morning tea.

As well, they often rued not having peers to bounce ideas off, to review their work and to discuss things with.

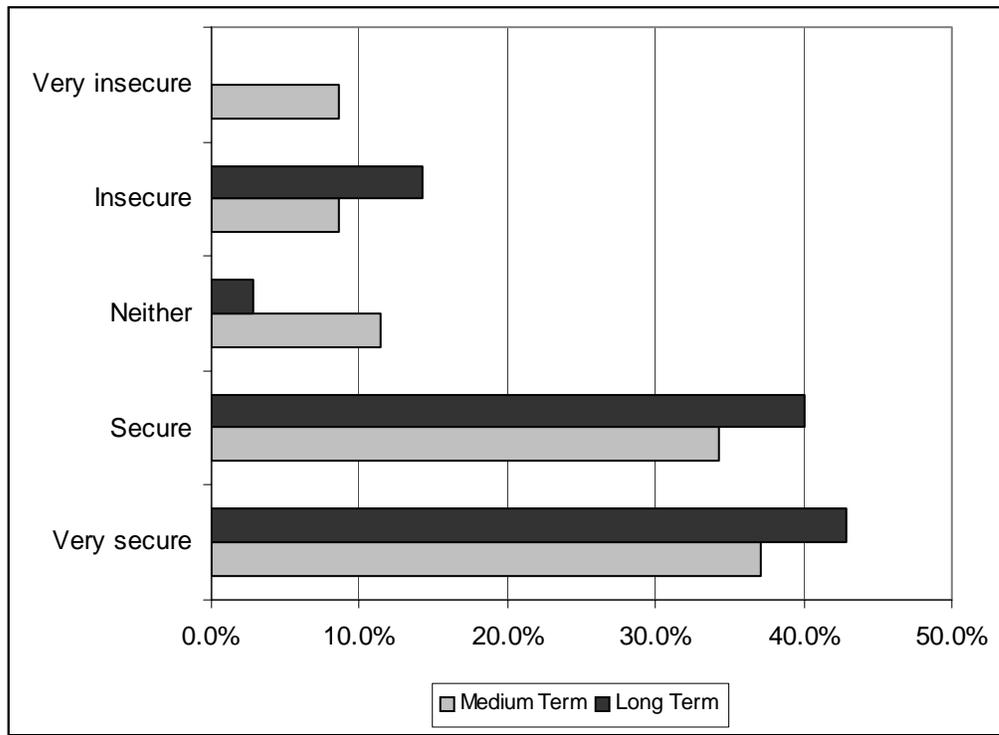
Everything is done on my own. It is all my own thinking, and I find that really quite hard.

I did miss the interaction and the ability to just bounce professional issues and ideas in an environment in which you could feed off each other.

Since many of those interviewed worked in professional areas this was seen as quite important part of the work process. Allied to this was not always knowing the latest trends and being aware of education and training opportunities.

Isolation in terms of learning new skills. So you have to be making an effort to go to courses whereas when you are in an organisation you have that going on around you.

Figure 7. Level of Employment Security/Insecurity Experienced by Participants When Considering the Medium and Long Term Future.



This difficulty, regardless of whether it was due to isolation or not, was a specific complaint for a small number of people. People also felt that it was easy to become isolated from networks that might provide such information, and that were essential for developing and running a business. As well, there was a sense that working outside organisations reduced people’s access to a whole range of resources. Given the broad and significant impacts that isolation could have both personally and on the business, people recognised the need to actively work to overcome this. Thus, they made time for social engagements, deliberately networked, and identified specific peer relationships for support and advice.

While only overtly stated in a few cases, the demands of long hours, often at unsociable times, proved to be a negative aspect of contracting for some people. Tied in with this was the recognition that they were regularly required to work very intensely, adding to the pressures they experienced. One man noted that balancing competing demands among contracts could add to that stress. As has already been explored in the section on *Managing Non-Standard Working Arrangements*, working in non-standard ways created advantages and disadvantage in blending home and work and in balancing the two sets of demands. Clearly this was exacerbated when workloads were heavy.

Balancing competing demands was the main disadvantage cited by people who had some form of work mosaic, particularly those who did contracting and had an employee role as well. While this combination could also have a negative impact on home life, it was balancing both work roles that created the greatest demands. This man, who had just such a mosaic, described the effects not only of co-ordinating competing roles, but of also managing the numerous obligations he had as a contractor.

I think the other thing is the seductive element to it, that you get to be a bit excited at your own capacity to keep all the glass balls in the air at the same time. There is kind of an adrenaline rush to that as well. You get quite good at multitasking and having lots of things on board at once which is quite exciting, but it is a bit dangerous because you can end up kind of running on adrenaline and then realise that there is absolutely nothing else in your life other than working.

In his case the negative effects rather crept up on him. Though he was now more aware of this effect, he still had to be wary not to fall into the same trap.

8. Education and Training

A very broad examination of the background education and training of those interviewed was provided in an earlier section that gave an overview of the sample. The purpose of this section is to explore the issue of education and training as it relates to those engaged in alternative ways of working. Perhaps the strongest overall finding is that education and training for this group has moved from a qualification-based approach to a knowledge orientation. That is, though many of those interviewed held formal professional and tertiary qualifications, they were now engaged in gathering knowledge rather than qualifications. This knowledge and the ongoing process of knowledge acquisition was critical to successfully running their businesses. One of those interviewed summed this up very well. Though he was in the IT industry, his comments were equally applicable across a range of industries.

I don't see us falling behind the play. We are always learning the latest stuff and you have got customers wanting the latest stuff, then you always tend to be learning. So it's not like when you get a degree and then in ten years time you do an MBA, or something like that, to get really upskilled, and then five years again go and do something else.

It is interesting to track the evolution and reasons for this shift.

A number of reasons were given for the view that the more formal course or programme approach with its emphasis on qualifications was somewhat redundant or inappropriate. For instance, as many contractors were providing specialist services, it could be hard to find courses or programmes that had appropriate content at advanced levels. The availability of such courses clearly varied depending on the type of work people were involved in, from those who were reasonably well served to others who had access to few if any relevant courses.

This latter group was often composed of contractors who were at the leading edge in their field, as the following quote illustrates. Other innovative contractors were less explicit in their comments but a similar disposition was evident. It is easy to infer from these remarks the problems faced in terms of education and training for such innovators.

We actually try and apply everything in our jobs. If we see something new, we will try and build it and do it and use it. We are not afraid to do things like that, just always trying to be, I guess, the leading edge of what we do. Because we realise that we have to be quite an innovative technical company that is always up with the play of what it does and we can be flexible. Whereas a big company will take a long time to pick up on new methods and things like that

One intriguing implication of being at the leading edge is that not only are appropriate educational opportunities hard to find but rather than being students, the contractors might be the teachers. There was also the sense, tied in with this innovative disposition, that contractors had to be able to implement and apply what they learnt. This drove a desire for more practically orientated learning. As a consequence, a few people found institutional learning too divorced from the reality of their contract situations.

I am not a big believer in some of the formal study courses – you tend to find that there is a big gap between theory and practical applications. As a practitioner, especially with some of the work I do, I spend a lot of time with academics who are developing all this theory and

arguing about it. ...Whereas I say, "How do we implement that theory?" ...So how do you work through that?

That said, a group involved in an IT business believed that having links with a university and relationships with staff and students was critical as these were places where the latest information and processes were being taught.

Often people described themselves as more practically orientated with their learning occurring as they work.

Most of it is self-taught, on-the-job.

This further reinforced the sense of seamless interaction between work and learning. It also has limited congruence with the idea of periodically enrolling in formal programmes and gaining discrete qualifications.

Sometimes curricula and content of relevance to contractors was available, but as part of more broadly based programmes. The issue then became finding the time to take on a course or programme that only had a small portion that was of particular interest or use to them.

We are [thinking about] going back to University and doing something but it takes too long and I can never find what I really want in New Zealand. There is only one or two courses that I would really like to do ... We have a few here, but they are never packaged the way you want them, and you never have the time.

Given the fluctuating demands and unpredictable nature of their work, it is unsurprising that contractors might have trouble committing to a regular, set time over an extended period. Some people also shied away from courses or programmes, regardless of content, format or duration due to costs. While these could be a source of tax benefits, they still had to be paid for out of what were often precarious earnings.

Those who worked in alternative ways often missed out on workplace training and education and they had to compensate for this themselves. While obviously applying to contractors, some employees also experienced this exclusion. Even though she worked within a company, given that she was employed via a temporary help agency, one woman clearly recognised that education and training were her personal responsibility. A woman who had a teleworking relationship with the company that employed her part-time felt that being based at home and not working full-time meant that she was doubly excluded from workplace education and training.

Given such difficulties, people adopted a range of education and training strategies. As has been acknowledged, first and foremost they had to accept more personal responsibility for their personal and professional development. In response to the issues of time and cost, people tended to be very focused in their activities and consequently often chose shorter or condensed learning opportunities. This man highlights the additional benefits from such opportunities.

We tend to go to more workshop type things and we attend conferences, but more from a marketing kind of a 'what's happening' perspective. ... I quite like the workshops ... [they can be] really practical, talking about people that had actually done these things, ...[with]

good working groups, where you actually learnt a lot about how to apply those skills and techniques.

Of course, even with these types of workshops or courses, cost and timing were still issues to be considered.

More often, the Internet was cited as a key learning tool. This gave people access to a wealth of information at times and in ways that were convenient for them.

I get a lot of information from the net. There are several quite good sites that I use just to keep my hand in. ...There are actually courses on-line that I would like to do as well.

We are constantly upskilling and I find that the Internet is a great resource for that. It is up-to-date if you know where to look. It is where I get the majority of my programming tips and 'how to' things. ...There are on-line reference manuals.

As was alluded to in the second quote, their background training, experience and knowledge became vital in identifying and then judiciously sorting and evaluating the material that was available.

Networks were another education and training strategy that people employed. Like the Internet, it is a strategy that clearly signals the shift to information and knowledge acquisition rather than formal qualifications. Certainly, associates and colleagues could alert one another to courses or programmes, but more often their role was more diffuse. They could, for instance provide peer reviews of work, offer advice, pass on latest information, or link people with those who have knowledge and skills that are needed

Sometimes technology and networks were combined, with various forms of electronic communication being used to facilitate contact with others. This increased the speed and scope of relationships, thereby expanding the depth of knowledge and skills that could be drawn on. At the extreme of this were Internet based support groups such as one woman described.

The only other thing that I have done recently which has been fantastic is that I have joined to Internet support groups. ...Basically somebody will post an e-mail with a problem and then.. it is up to 1300 to 1500 [people] in the e-mail list, and they will respond with solutions or suggestions. I have posted some problems like that, and people have come back with an answer. I have also responded to other people who have problems. That has been invaluable because I have learnt a huge amount in that. And both of them have archives, so if you have a problem you can go in and search and you know you find that international knowledge which is .. you know, that has been a key.

Outside of the possibilities offered by technology, the very basic act of reading offered this group a common and simple approach to education and training, perhaps now better described as ongoing learning. Regardless of approach, those engaged in alternative forms of work recognised the importance of ongoing learning to maintaining and advancing their skills and knowledge. For contractors it also meant the survival of their business. As one man observed, it was impossible for one person to maintain a comprehensive knowledge and expertise base across such a diverse sector, as IT for example. Rather,

All one can hope to do is to keep up to date and get up to speed in the area that you are going to be working in.

As such, this seemed to capture the general motivation and approach of the people interviewed who seemed keen to remain skilled and knowledgeable in best practise in the particular area they worked in. They demonstrated a reflexivity in relation to evaluating and attending to their personal education and training needs that seems an essential component to working in non-standard ways. This is, as Rose (1999:161) puts it, because “life is to become a continuous capitalisation of the self”. The various approaches they adopted to achieve this often reflected things like the sector, industry or area they worked in, but more often was influenced by the demands created by their alternative working arrangements. These arrangements presented a number of challenges and ultimately meant that people assumed personal responsibility for their ongoing learning. Those interviewed clearly experienced a range of obstacles to doing this but, having recognised the onus was on them alone, as has been shown, they appeared to be developing effective responses to the challenges.

9. Technology

Technology is an increasing feature of paid work regardless of the circumstances of employment. In other reports that the LMD has produced (e.g. Shirley et al., 2001a, b, and c), workers reported the introduction of various technology-based innovations to all manner of workplaces, necessitating skilled and unskilled workers to become competent in the operation of computerised equipment and machinery. Given that one of the criteria for inclusion in this study was that participant's had a technology or knowledge component in their work role, it is unsurprising that technology was a very visible aspect of the work that those interviewed undertook. At the very least, everyone who was interviewed made use of technology on a par with its presence in the average workplace. Thus, they used computer-based products (e.g. for word processing and accounting), e-mail, Internet access, mobile phone technology and so on. However, not unexpectedly, many people made much more substantial use of technology. An earlier section has already identified that over half of those interviewed could be termed teleworkers, using the Danish Board of Technology definition. Another summary statistic in this area is that nearly 40 percent of businesses were technology based. That is, their product or service had a primary focus on some aspect of technology. Some examples include a web-based magazine, web page development, information technology security, software development, sales and support, and digital imaging. Other companies relied heavily on technology to actually do their business.

I think the other big benefit for technology that we haven't mentioned is the fact that being in New Zealand, without the technology that we have, there is no way our company would exist. We couldn't do the job we do from New Zealand for 18 countries without the technology we have. We can do training via video conferencing; we can do e-mailing, like I said, for our support.

Running businesses that employed cutting edge or novel uses of technology was not without its problems, however. It could be hard work to overcome resistance and to get people used to new possibilities and ways of operating. This is well described by a man who became involved in digital printing.

Well the thing about this business was that it was a new and emerging technology that meant that potential customers could now buy a one off full colour poster. In the past they usually get runs of hundreds, if not thousands to justify the set up costs. So in effect we had a story to tell, it wasn't like knocking on a door and having to say "I can do this the same as everyone else can", it was "Hey, I have got something new here, you should take a look at this". Basically I persevered and slowly broke into some markets.

Similarly, this woman who ran an already successful web-based magazine still confronted reluctance to accept this new format and approach.

You are just trying to get them to understand that marketing is about reaching people, it is not about having a costly magazine, it is about reaching people and selling more products. ...The internet has taken five years to reach 150 million and it took TV 13 years and radio and cable television 13 years to reach that amount of people and the internet did it in five and it just keeps growing.

Clearly this group was keen to push the boundaries of technology and many displayed a level of expertise or creativity that would enhance what they had to offer. In establishing their enterprises many drew on their prior experience in business to identify how technology could be inventively employed or used to enhance the operation of their businesses. Many had websites and some even provided on-line services. Others used Internet based chat programmes to link them when they were conferencing or working at isolated locations on the same project. One company maintained a virtual office via a shared server that linked all four partners. They also employed technology to allow them to have their business phones answered at a central location (by an agency on their behalf) and then calls were sent to individual cell phones.

Technology was also integrated with unlikely business ventures.

Astrology and technology just go together so incredibly well. It makes it more available and more accessible to average people.

In providing readings via an 0900 telephone service, this woman and colleagues recognised that certain negative connotations regarding such services had to be overcome. She also employed technology in other ways.

I have just started doing readings by email and things like that. ... I get a lot of information from the net. There are several really quite good sites that I use just to keep my hand in ...and there are actually courses on line that I would like to do as well.

In addition, she also was able to receive credit card payments on-line for her services.

As has already been noted earlier in the previous chapter on *Education and Training*, technology also provided the means to gather information and identify or engage in learning opportunities.

The use of the Internet is absolutely essential, getting the latest and greatest of what people are saying out there, trying to keep up to date with what is going on. I mean a lot of it has to do with keeping up to date and making sure your work is up to scratch and that you are able to compete with [large companies].

Similarly, as will be discussed shortly, technology was often employed as a networking tool. Just as technology allowed business to be conducted offshore, it also allowed connections and relationships well beyond one's immediate environs.

There are people whose expertise I tap into who are working in other countries and that's facilitated [by technology].

If I were interested in fronting for the job I could invisibly haul in behind me as many people as I choose. Really the Internet revolution has made that possible. It wasn't possible 15 years ago. There is all sorts available to you now, off shore, anywhere in the world, anybody you happened to have bumped into, which you can use for specific areas of expertise.

This communication could also involve the easy and efficient sending of documents and other material. One woman made some interesting observations regarding electronically mediated communication.

I find that communicating by e-mail can be a bit impersonal but it is very efficient. You know that you have made the call, i.e. you have got it recorded there and then it is up to them to reply. It is a good way of storing things. It's quite a good leveller, it is a good way to approach people that may seem a little bit daunting, and it is very efficient.

Though those interviewed were clearly strong advocates of technology, and it can be seen to open up all sorts of opportunities and possibilities, some people made some cautionary observations. For many people technology allowed them to work from home or at a distance from their clients or employers. However, as was apparent in the discussion of the home-work nexus, this accessibility also meant that technology could intrude on one's personal and home life. Limits and structures were therefore necessary so as to help create boundaries and maintain some balance. One woman who teleworked maintained a wide availability for her clients even though she only worked two days a week.

I've got a cellphone as well that I have on all the time so I am available 24 hours on that, but five days a week for the client. Though I can be grocery shopping and get a business call.

At these times this woman was able to pass on the call to her office to deal with. Since her client was aware that she teleworked and cared for a child they knew she was not always 'at the office' when they called they were reasonably understanding of her circumstances, but she did not want to abuse that by not delivering. This next woman identified some of the negative aspects of technology, not only at home, but in the workplace too.

I guess just the technology that we have today. It's not all positive; it can be negative as well. Having the technology we have means that you can take your work home, which means you can work your weekends, you can work your evenings, and sometimes it's hard to know where to stop, there is always something to do. Because of the product we sell, for example we support. we know that before we had e-mail and the Internet, people's jobs in the day. it was a lot easier, they would get the mail in the morning and then they would get the next lot of mail the next morning. With e-mail they are getting work coming in constantly through the day. Even within our own organisation I see that has been one of the biggest time factors or time managements for my employees, is to say to them, "you need to say I am clearing my e-mail at 9.00am and 3.00pm" and in between you get your jobs done. Otherwise you would sit there constantly doing e-mail all day. It's just the way technology is, so you have to be a little bit flexible with the way you manage your time.

Just as she suggests certain strategies for effectively managing e-mail, so it seems that many of the others we interviewed were not only looking to introduce and use technology to their advantage, but were also trying to find ways to balance any negative impacts.

10. Networks

Networks have been a notable aspect of previous research conducted by the LMD (e.g. Shirley et al., 2001a, b, and c) and they proved to also be a prominent feature of working in non-standard ways. People's assessment of their value ranged from important to vital. In an intriguing twist on an old saying, one of those interviewed summed up how critical they were.

It's not what you know, it's not even who you know, it's who knows you.

The networks of those we interviewed were made up of a range of people who were connected directly with the work they were involved in, were in some way associated with knowledge and expertise relevant to that work, or were part of the interviewees wider social group. Of course there were areas of overlap between the three categories and over time shifts occurred with some members of work networks becoming part of a person's social network. Indeed, in one woman's case, her networks were so highly interwoven that it would be hard to disentangle them according to any such model. More usually some distinctions were possible. Networks were composed of individuals, groups, organisations and other businesses. They may be locally based or drawn from a much wider area. Some people talked about international contacts they established and maintained. As was observed in a separate section, technology had greatly enhanced the maintenance and utilisation of such distant links.

Really the Internet revolution has made that possible. It wasn't possible 15 years ago. There is all sorts available to you now, off shore, anywhere in the world, anybody you happened to have bumped into, which you can use for specific areas of expertise.

The reciprocal nature of networks is nicely illustrated by some of those who were interviewed also noting how they formed part of other people's networks.

A number of those who were interviewed had immigrated to this country. They often faced particular difficulties getting work. One issue in relation to this was that they did not have established networks. As this section shows these were important, but could take time to develop. This was certainly the experience of this man in terms of his transition into non-standard work.

It was really just social networking more than anything else. The official job market was a dead loss. I actually applied for two or three jobs that I thought would interest me and I got stopped dead, I didn't even get an interview for those jobs, which was very disappointing. The amount of experience I had had, I expected to walk into a top rate job immediately and call the shots and I think that is the experience of a lot of immigrants to New Zealand as well. They come away very disappointed that it doesn't happen to them. ... Just as time went on – a bit of a network, social interaction and so forth, you would bump into someone who would say we need somebody to have a look at this, do you know of anybody like that and I would say yes. We have been here six years and it has taken probably four or five of those to get any semblance of a network operating.

People identified a range of purposes that networks could be used for. They could play a part in the initial transition, for example, such as was the case where friends were critical in helping people identify opportunities and make the move into non-standard work.

[My daughter] did swimming lessons and one of the girls at swimming lessons is a nurse and does this [kind of work] and said to me, "Oh, I have this great job." And I thought, wow that sounds like a great job. So I rang [the government agency] and found out ... who were the contractors. Then I rang all of the contractors and two of the ladies were quite keen and one of them I went to see and had an informal interview and said she would get back to me when the contracts were reviewed. One of them said I will take you on after Christmas and then she rang me about two days before Christmas and said, "We have these referrals, can you do them?" So that's how I started.

For contractors particularly, networks had a vital role in identifying and obtaining work. Given the uncertainty of workflows that plagued this group, it was important to use every avenue and opportunity to generate work.

There is a lot of networking and a lot of word of mouth. That is where a lot of my business comes from.

Indeed, networks could obviate the need for public relations, advertising and marketing, since it seemed that they provided the bulk of many contractors' work.

We spent time writing up proposals and bidding for work but we probably only got one in three or one in four of those. ...We spend money on marketing, we spend money doing lots of business development stuff, but most of the work we get is word of mouth.

I have never had to advertise. I have never had to market myself. The networks I have got, I have built up through personal contact, as you interact with people and they find out that you are doing a job, that you are there to support them. ...If you do some quality work then you are able to support their business so they respond by giving you all their work. This thing has just grown on me.

It is hard not to underestimate the value of networks in this regard. Word-of-mouth is a common and suitable metaphor for how networks operated in relation to generating work opportunities in many cases. In one instance, however, the drawbacks to networks as a basis for work opportunities was raised. This man felt that strong and enduring relationships created a kind of moral obligation to take on work offered by people even if the nature or timing of the work was unsuitable.

Another important function of networks was as sources of expertise. They were used to have work critiqued and appraised by professional peers. In a similar vein, people sometimes found mentors through networks.

I think it is essential that if you are self-employed that you do work alongside other people and get advice, support and compliment your skills.

Alternatively, networks might link contractors with people whom they could employ, usually in a sub- or co-contracting capacity.

We are just looking at sub-contractors because we have had quite a bit come in which we are not sure whether we can handle between us. At the moment it is just pure word of mouth. The contacts are just coming through mutual friends. We interviewed someone last weekend who was a friend of a friend who we had met socially and not really understood what her skill base was. She had heard that we were possibly looking for more people and contacted us and there is a possibility that we will get her to do some work for us.

Occasionally they also helped link people with others who had specialist skills they could utilise.

If I have needed other specialist skills I have consulted other people about them without having the need to actually employ them or contract them.

Networks could also act as sources of information. Specifically, this could mean keeping people up-to-date with advances and best practice in their areas of expertise. They might also be used as sounding board to air views and ideas. More generally, networks could help people in the set up and running of their businesses, as this woman found. Her networks provided some simple but vital guidance about where to get information about setting up in business.

I have networked with a friend, couple of friends and they have said there is a little booklet they had and they found it had a website, so then they went to that website. And so I guess I have used networks to find out where to go to get things and that has been very important.

The process of generating and maintaining networks was ongoing. This woman was able to utilise networks from her time in standard employment to her advantage in setting up a contracting business.

It's quite a niche market, that the networks are really strong, if you haven't got a good name, or people don't like you, or whatever, that can be a downside. I used a few of my old networks and just let them know that I was coming back in.

As this woman recognises, the specialised nature of many of the businesses meant that people relied heavily on networks to identify or connect with clients. Conversely, as this man pointed out, maintaining personal relationships can be equally important for differentiating businesses within larger markets.

I see the personal relationship we build with [clients] is equally important as the quality of work that we do. There are so many others that could provide the same product, the difference really is the personal relationship.

While new contacts often arose incidentally, people also worked deliberately at this process.

What I have found is that with our business I have, over the years, used a lot of communication through e-mail and so on. But I find that you really have to get still in front of people, you still have to spend that time to talk to them and that is very time consuming. But it is valuable because you get the two-way conversation going and you build up the relationship. Yeah, it is one of my top priorities to look after those people.

I don't consciously spend time marketing my business, but I do spend time keeping in touch with people. Making a phone call, having a cup of coffee, just spending time with people. Particularly with [one client], I have found one or two people that are useful there. I will just give them a ring, have a chat. Every now and then say, "have you got any work that might suit me?" And you have to be quite brazen about it; you don't get anywhere if you don't ask, because they are not going to offer, because they don't really think that way. But, if you make sure that what you have done in the past is good, and you follow it through, it sort of works.

Some described this as hard but necessary work, with a few having to force themselves to do what did not come naturally. As in other areas, having partners made networking easier. Not only was the combined network 'mass' larger, but one partner might devote time to aspects of networking. In a circular kind of fashion, as is implicit in the above

quote, doing business contributed to networks that contributed to business opportunities. Professional associations were sometimes used as one formal way of networking.

As was seen in the discussion of the disadvantages of derivative work, isolation was experienced quite strongly by many of those in non-standard work.

It is quite isolating really. All my jobs keep me tied to [home]. ...I just don't have the time to meet new people, so it does get very isolating and very lonely and I think that I really do need to make the effort to build up new contacts.

An important feature of networks was the role they played in overcoming this isolation in terms of people's working and, as this last quote implies, personal lives.

I like to bounce ideas off people whereas here I'm just hearing my own, which actually takes me more time. When I am with somebody I can generate ideas because of what they are saying a lot quicker. ... The actual isolation, everything is done on my own, it is all my own thinking and I find that really actually quite hard. ...I make myself network with people because of that.

Though this discussion has focused primarily on the value of networks in relation to contractors, they were important to others who worked in non-standard ways. For instance, a temporary help agency employee spoke of how useful they were in offering support amongst people in similar work. She also used them to keep abreast of, and gather information on, potential work opportunities, and about the temporary help agencies themselves. A woman who teleworked from home realised that her existing networks within the company that employed her were necessary in a couple of ways. They had helped to facilitate the teleworking approach and were necessary to ensure she could continue working this way.

I think a lot of the reason that I am able to do what I am is because I have got relationships with a few key people in the office. And I had built up my profile and they knew me ... Should these people leave those positions nobody would know the history and the background and have a respect for it, so I do feel vulnerable. As soon as my manager goes, and if his manager goes, they will be thinking who is this woman who is sat on the fringes, what is she doing for us?

As her latter comment reveal, losing these networks could jeopardise her ability to telework. In keeping her distant from the workplace, teleworking made it hard to maintain these relationships and foster new ones.

11. Legislation, Policy and Compliance Issues

Some general inquiries were made in the interviews regarding people's perceptions and experiences of legislation and policy that affected them as non-standard workers. A wide range of responses was elicited in relation to employment and taxation law, and other related areas (such as occupational health and safety, and accident compensation). These spanned very negative to more positive remarks, as well as those from people either unconcerned or philosophical about the issues, or else entirely ignorant of them. Variations in opinion were often the result of personal views. The divergent viewpoints are no more clearly evident than in these sets of comments made by two immigrants to this country who had subsequently become self-employed. One of them had a very negative perspective.

My only comment would be that a country as small as New Zealand to have that sort of heavy weight legislation in place where a work force of 90 percent of small businesses, is absolutely outrageous.

In contrast, the second man was extremely positive.

The authorities here are extremely friendly and supportive of small business, remarkably so. This country in my opinion is very, very supportive and you can see it all around you. There is a network of small little businesses everywhere. The whole economy is driven by these little businesses.

Other factors, such as the type of non-standard work that people engaged in, could also influence people's opinions and experiences. Even within a single group such as contractors, differences could depend on the structure and nature of particular businesses. Thus, compared to many contractors servicing multiple clients, a dependent contractor with a single client found little to complain about. Similarly, though a little critical of some compliance issues, another man observed that,

I think that we are both fortunate in a lot of the stuff that we do, being a reasonably simple consultancy firm. I know with other types of businesses you have a lot of stuff to deal with. If you have got more of a product-based company and things like that, there is a lot more things to do.

The most common complaints, even for those with little interest in or awareness of legislation or policy, related to taxation. The rate was generally felt to be too high and a burden, especially for new businesses or during start up. Given the high failure rate of fledgling enterprises, some people felt that businesses might benefit from having more of this money to invest and use, thereby aiding their survival during this difficult time. It could also be channelled into research and development. The provisional nature of the taxation regime was also considered a negative and seen as a trap for new entrants. This was exacerbated by people having to put sufficient money aside to meet likely tax requirements yet still find money to cover the many and varied needs of a new business often struggling to survive. On the positive side of the tax issue, most people acknowledged taking full advantage of the benefits available to them for working from home.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was another specific issue raised by people. Some saw it as just an aspect of running a business.

I pay GST and stuff ... I find that usually it is not too bad. But you have to monitor every little thing, track all of your expenses and things like that, and it is another headache. But then I guess that is just good business management skills, so you should be doing it.

More often, though, it was seen as a time consuming tax to administer. The extreme viewpoint held that,

The idea that companies collect the [GST] tax on behalf of the government might make sense for medium or large organisations but for small organisations like ours it is truly onerous.

Not only did activities such as administering GST take up a great deal of time, but they could not be charged for. Though, as one of the men quoted above notes, these are part of running a business, they reduced chargeable hours and took people away from their business activities.

Some concerns were raised about employment law and regulations. As a group, the contractors who were interviewed did not usually employ staff, with only four of the 36 who were self-employed having employees. A range of reasons accounts for this. For instance, some businesses were one-person operations, while in other cases people did not want their companies to grow beyond certain self-imposed limits. As is explored in another section on the structure of businesses, many contractors preferred to use other contractors as sub- or co-contractors rather than employ people. The reasons they opted for these sorts of arrangements were also multi-faceted but one explanation for this and the more general decision not to employ people concerned employment law. As one woman observed,

I don't have any people in my business, I think most of those hindrances are when you have employees. That is a nightmare when you have OSH and ACC and you have to have time off for this and time off for that. I can appreciate that [for] the small businesses with people involved it is a nightmare.

Indeed, those that employed staff were very aware of their increased responsibilities and the greater complexities in managing staff. For instance, as the woman just quoted notes, other legislation such as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) became much more prominent concerns. The complexities of employment relations were further illustrated by one of the temporary help agency employees who pointed out that her style of employment saw her regarded as self-employed which meant that she had to account for her own tax, ACC and other such responsibilities.

Over and above issues to do with employee relations, the recent passage of the Employment Relations Act (2000) has special implications for contractors. As this woman notes, the changes brought in by this Act mean that both parties have to be aware of the new legal definitions of their relationship and responsibilities.

To be honest I think with the Employment Relations Act it made quite a big difference to some of my growth plans for the future because they are a lot more stringent now, with the way you contract staff. That has implicated us because of the vulnerability of the IT industry. There is always that risk of taking too many people on and the work not being there for them. Contracting for us has always been a very attractive option and of course it is contracting individuals that has become much more difficult.

Consequently she had elected to contract to another company rather than individuals, which had ultimately proved to work much better. Another man, who was contracted almost exclusively to one company, felt his employment status was rather uncertain as a direct result of these changes. It seemed that while these changes had been enacted to increase people's protections, some contractors saw them as a further interference in how they worked and with whom. Having this sort of flexibility had been an attraction for becoming a contractor.

Flexibility was central to other people's concerns as well. What one employer wanted was the law to provide basic minimum protections but to allow sufficient flexibility for employers to engage staff in ways that suited the business and the employees. This need for flexibility reflects the uncertainty, instability and unpredictability often associated with workflows in self-employment and contracting, and which has already been discussed in detail elsewhere in the report. A woman who held two part-time positions as an employee provided the other perspective on employment legislation. She had been in one of the jobs for many years and had found that conditions for employees had gradually eroded and that they were often in weak positions from which to negotiate.

The references to flexibility reflect a wider sense that the existing legislative and policy framework is inadequate for small businesses and for those engaged in non-standard working arrangements. The first quote used in this section sums up a common perception in this regard – although New Zealand is an economy that has a preponderance of small businesses, the legislative context does not always reflect or support this. Similar sentiments were echoed by this interviewee when asked about the business environment.

I think there could be a lot [support] more given that it is a small business country, it could be a lot more oriented towards helping small businesses succeed, whether it is tax breaks, R & D, whatever, those things aren't been done. Why should businesses in the first year have to really struggle? A lot of it is insight you know. Why should businesses in their first year have to pay 33 percent tax? Why don't you get a small break to allow you to find your feet? If it is going to fail it is going to fail after the first year, but at least it would give you a chance for a good shot, have a good go at it.

Some people felt that problems arose because laws were drafted to suit large rather than small enterprises, something identified earlier by one interviewee in his comments regarding GST compliance. One man lamented the lack of protections to ensure small businesses, especially in a sub-contracting relationship, got paid. Others were concerned that little was done by way of support or funding alternatives to generate and sustain new ventures. Despite these reservations, one interviewee felt it was an exciting time for enterprise development in this country given that business, government and education providers were making far greater efforts to work together and promote opportunities. Another woman spoke positively about the assistance she had had from The Department of Work and Income with starting her business while unemployed.

As well as these concerns regarding the mismatch between legislation and the needs of small business, some people believed that the regulatory environment was also failing to cater for the growing trend towards non-standard work. In this regard, one man felt that the existing structures assumed particular ways of working and a make up of work that did not necessarily apply to those in derivative work forms. Another man reinforced these

ideas claiming that employment legislation was aimed at the mainstream – the bulk of people who are in more standardised arrangements. Consequently it failed those on the margins. Though she did not feel overly obstructed by legislation and the like, another woman reinforced this sense that the current regimes were unsuited to new ways of working and that government needed to respond to this.

I just think that there does need to be more study and research and wider recognition on less structured kind of work routines.

This woman felt that working in non-standard ways was so different that, just as with small businesses in general, people employed this way needed specific recognition, support and nurturing. At present she and others felt they were,

... just falling through the cracks all the time because you feel that you are not particularly part of any particular group or you don't fit in anywhere. You just feel that there is very little support really and I think that there needs to be wider recognition, particularly for the fact that you need to work different hours or want to work different hours, or don't want to work under any particular structure.

For those, like this woman, who were largely accepting of the legislative environment, there was a sense that this was a fact of doing business and that everyone was affected in much the same way. This man summed up such an attitude.

I view things perhaps in a very different way to the way a lot of people do. I never bother about whether the environment is conducive to good working conditions or whatever. ... This is the environment that we work in, take it or leave it. Everybody is in the same boat. It is up to each one of us to play within the rules and do as best as we possibly can within the rules. Like tax, for example. It is an aggravation, nobody wants to affect their profit by additional tax but you have to recognise that you are not alone, everybody is paying extra tax. The country has a choice, either do it this way or that way, and you have to just go with it. I never dwell on that sort of thing.

Regardless of their position on various legislative issues, given their complexity some people clearly identified the need for, and importance of, sound professional advice. This point was reinforced by some of those with strong business backgrounds and qualifications.

Two further points, though not canvassed by large numbers of people, are worth mentioning. Firstly, the uncertainty of workflows associated with some aspects of non-standard work mean that people's income could be similarly unstable. For a couple of people this affected their ability to borrow money.

Loans are very hard to get because you are in casual employment and you don't have guaranteed work and you don't have guaranteed income so that is very hard.

On the positive side, since she had had to find other ways to finance equipment purchases and the like, one woman belatedly felt that this had helped keep her overheads low.

Secondly, given the emphasis in recruiting interviewees on the knowledge basis of their work, it was interesting to have a couple of people raise the question of intellectual property. Rather than people fixing things or selling a product or service, often they more specifically traded on their knowledge and experience. The question then becomes, who

owns the outcomes of these transactions? The question is even more vexed when secondary relationships are involved.

Let's say a company ... contract us to do work for one of their clients. So we bring some intellectual property, we develop a new mechanism, and the client uses it. Who does that belong to? Nobody knows the answer.

Those who were interviewed had no ready answers to this question. It was one of many that are prompted by the emergence of alternative forms of work and knowledge-based activities.

12. Associations and Collaborations

As discussed in Chapter 10, networks were considered to be a prominent feature of working in derivative ways and ranged from very informal, incidental encounters to more formal associations and collaborations on specific contracts. Though networks were clearly important in connecting people with others who might have knowledge or expertise they could use, it is also worth considering how contractors more formally engaged others. This was most often achieved through what we term associations and collaborations, rather than by employing staff in the traditional manner.

In the previous chapter on *Legislation, Policy and Compliance* issues it is noted that employment law had some negative impact on contractors employing staff. However, the motivation for engaging in associations or collaborations was more positively orientated. Arthur et al. (1999) concur suggesting that gaining access to other people's knowledge and resources is a fundamental step. Handy (1995) goes further submitting that groups of colleagues are united in mutual trust. Having associations or collaborations allowed contractors to achieve a number of inter-related goals. Firstly, they provided one means of coping with the uneven workflows characteristic of contracting.

We are just looking at sub-contractors because we have had quite a bit come in which we are not sure whether we can handle between us.

Like other contractors, though, this woman opted for sub-contracting as opposed to employing people as it minimised the compliance issues and meant they were not paying people when work was not available. However, even though they might not employ people, whenever others are engaged to do work on someone's behalf, additional responsibilities still ensue. As one man observed, and as others inferred, the main contractor remained responsible for the contract, the quality of work, and to the client – they were the 'face' of any virtual team that they might have created to work on the project. They also remained responsible for paying the sub-contractor, regardless of any problems they might be having with the client.

Engaging others had the second benefit of providing the enterprise with access to a wider range of skills and expertise, without having to formally expand the business through partnerships or taking on employees.

I've put in over the years proposals to do some work for organisations where I have said in the proposal that it may well be that during the course of this exercise that I feel I need specific expertise and that I would bring in somebody to assist me if I thought I needed that.

Finally, associations and collaborations could be reciprocal relationships. Thus, not only did contractors provide work for others but their associates and collaborators could be sources of work for those same contractors. In this way contractors might themselves become sub-contractors in some circumstances, and the lead contractors at other times.

Most often associations and collaborations were fairly informal arrangements built up and maintained over time. The companies of a couple of interviewees maintained much more formal partnership arrangements. These were with companies rather than individuals, expanding the value of the relationships.

We tend to have built partnerships, so we are partners with a couple of different companies ... a company in the States.

In one instance, the move from contracting people to a partnership with another company was prompted by changes to employment legislation.

Contracting for us has always been a very attractive option. And of course it is contracting individuals that has become much more difficult. So what we have done now is we have basically partnered up a company so we can actually join their contract for services which for us works better.

As the first example shows, partnerships could be international as well as locally based. So too could collaborations and associations, especially thanks to technological innovations.

Really the Internet revolution has made that possible. It wasn't possible 15 years ago. There is all sorts available to you now, off shore, anywhere in the world – anybody you happened to have bumped into, which you can use for specific areas of expertise.

In between the very formal and the very loose relationships that characterised associations, collaborations and partnerships were *collectives* that two of the interviewees were part of. Each was involved in social services and in setting up their businesses they had banded together with other like professionals. This provided them with a pool of expertise, business and professional support, and the ability to share the marketing of their enterprise. Within the collective, however, each was a sole trader and often worked quite independently of the others. One woman described the structure of her collective.

Initially we all got together and spent lots and lots of time together and we made a pamphlet and did all that and then went off and touted ourselves. ...and we got a Post Office box together but now basically if someone rings me I generally take the work and if I've got too much I'll ring one of the others and say do you want some work, we do a lot of that sort of thing. Generally we all know which cases we are working on and help each other out. Sometimes we co-work them. ...we are sole traders when it comes to tax and that sort of thing.

In addition to contractors having to have access to a range of skills and expertise in their area of operation, they often needed input in running and managing their business. For some, this meant taking expert advice and retaining professional services¹⁷. It was not uncommon for people, even with business backgrounds, to employ accountants to ensure their accounts were in order. Even some of those who worked as employees (such as one of the temporary help agency employees) used professional services to manage their affairs. Administering their companies, even with this sort of help, was often a time consuming and distracting aspect of running a business, one that could not be directly charged for. These support relationships often involved those in alternative work arrangements engaging others who worked in non-standard ways. Like the use of associations, collaborations and partnerships, regardless of the nature or direction of these

¹⁷ Intriguingly, this represents one area of non-standard work supporting another area with all manner of businesses using professionals such as lawyers and accountants who are often working outside standard arrangements. A parallel piece of research looking at the experiences of accountants is being conducted as part of the LMD Project and will be reported on separately.

various contracting inter-relationships, having outside professional assistance in managing the business often created a situation where those in non-standard work foster other non-standard work opportunities.

The participants were overwhelmingly in favour of associations and collaborations as these formed a vital part in completing contracts most effectively and efficiently. Not all studies have found the same. Baines (1999) in a study on self-employed men and women in the print and broadcasting media, commented that she had not anticipated the extreme competition and suspicion which inhibited links with others. Cohen et al. (1999:343), in a similar study, were intrigued by the extent to which the self-employed sought to dissociate themselves from other portfolio people.

13. Insider/Outsider Relationships

Many of those interviewed faced the issue of being an outsider in relation to the client or company they are working in at a particular time. This particularly affected temporary help agency employees and contractors. Indeed, as one man put it, for contractors the experience was very much like frequently starting a new job and was a big part of this role.

If you don't like first days in companies, then this is not the job for you ... there are lots of first days.

Some of these people contrasted this with their experiences of being an employee or insider. Most people who were in these circumstances experienced some resistance to their entry into and ongoing involvement in a workplace. Only a couple of people reported no such problems. It seems that resistance was usually focused on the job or role rather than the person, and sometimes it was simply due in part to the very different way contractors worked and the freedoms and flexibility they enjoyed. Resistance could occur at all levels of the organisation and varied depending on a range of factors. These included

- the prior presence and use of outsiders – this meant people had some experience of their role and function
- company and industry attitudes – certain industries such as IT are more used to the present of contract workers for instance
- the wider climate towards outsiders – currently central government is less inclined to use contractors than previously so this affects those who are working this way
- the skills, experience, expertise and credibility of the outsider

The last point was also felt by those interviewed to be the key to overcoming resistance. Consequently, people used their communication and people skills, reputation, and relationships to lower barriers and opposition. Most were able to successfully achieve this or at least minimise the effects of resistance on their work. It could become a hindrance at times, however, with some companies unaware that the restrictions they place on outsiders actually prevents contractors from doing their work. Restrictions regarding IT access were often particularly rigid and necessitated people having to be onsite when otherwise they could work elsewhere.

While outsider status might place very obvious restrictions or limitations on a person's work, other more subtle effects can happen as well. One contractor noted, for instance, that not being part of the employee group and in the office all day every day simply meant you were excluded from ambient knowledge that could also be helpful. Ironically, in these circumstances, people just weren't aware of what they didn't know. This contractor had come to realise this after taking on a part-time position in a company that she had previously contracted to.

Importantly, as one person observed, the contractor needs to be clear about what their role is and who, within the organisation, they are working for. While resistance still might need to be overcome for them to do their job, becoming 'part' of the workplace

may not be necessary or appropriate in many cases. Indeed, one positive aspect of the outsider status was that the contractor could go about their task without the emotional attachments that grow within workplaces. This was particularly useful for those involved in organisational analysis and restructuring. Another issue concerns the problematic matter of contractors representing the organisation they are contracted, even though they are not employed by it.

Two further observations regarding this issue are worthwhile noting. Firstly, one man found working for the same organisation as an insider one day, and an outsider the next, an intriguing experience. Not only did relationships change quite dramatically and often quite quickly, but he was most struck by the fact that although he was sure he was valued as an employee, this was much more frequently and overtly expressed when he became a contractor. Secondly, the distinction between outsider and insider remains even when people might for all appearances consider themselves to be virtual insiders. That is, people on very long-term or consecutive contracts often feel or believe they are much more part of the organisation both socially and physically given the time they spend in the office. However, as one man noted, certain events can very forcibly reinforce that regardless of appearances you are very much the outsider still.

You think you are more part of the organisation, so when you are not included in something, it becomes a bit more of a stark contrast. It is much more confusing, because they treat you like an employee most of the time, and they are putting those demands on you, but then as soon as there is an employee based thing, you are left out because you are not, you are a consultant aren't you. So the relationship there on the longer term ones gets even more blurred. At least with the short term ones you know the rules. It is very easy, it is a short term job, you are the consultant, whereas a long term one, you become part of the furniture, you are a bit unsure of whether you are an employee, or not some days.

While many of the self-employed worked inside organisations either intermittently during a contract or continuously for short periods, the two temporary help agency employees present interesting experiences given their more prolonged and intimate involvement in an organisation. Indeed, except for their employment relationship they largely resembled standard employees. One of these women, involved at the management level and in the IT industry, had had a range of experiences but overall seemed to manage her ambiguous position reasonably well. Intriguingly, she saw that maintaining aspects of her outsider status offered her a way to remain apart from office politics and the like. The other woman, who worked at a lower level in accounting and administration, struggled with the insider/outsider issue. Being an immigrant she felt she was doubly an outsider. She also disliked having to always start from scratch and prove oneself on each assignment.

Being able to telework was a crucial factor in one woman's alternative employment profile. She worked part-time at her marketing role and though she spent time at her client's office, she was able to avoid spending any time at her employer's workplace, instead using technology (e mail, remote server access, and telephone) to conduct office related work from her home. This allowed her to better balance the care of her daughter with engaging in part-time work, and she was grateful for the opportunity and flexibility offered by working this way. However, she made some interesting observations as to some negative effects of a teleworking approach.

The negative side is you don't see your colleagues as much so you don't build up relationships with the office people that you need to. The [other] employees come and go and you have no idea who is in the office now. It's like who? Who's running this now? ...Like you do build up relationships. They are mostly developed over the phone and e mail, and that's difficult to do because you don't have the face to face communication, the body language. ...I'm not in the office to see opportunities. To say I'll take the initiative and set up this system or improve that, I don't have any extras like that. ...I am not getting the training that some people are getting which shows that management wants to promote them. For example, there was a leadership course recently and I wouldn't have been considered for it I don't think.

Thus, despite having worked for the company for a number of years, in particular ways teleworking was creating an outsider of an insider. As her comments show, the effects were on relationships, institutional knowledge, education and training, and promotion. Countering such insidious shifts and affects presents important challenges for employers and workers engaging in teleworking arrangements. She also had some comments about the difficulties that distance made for maintaining her employment arrangements

I think a lot of the reason that I am able to do what I am is because I have got relationships with a few key people in the office. And I had built up my profile and they knew me ... Should these people leave those positions nobody would know the history and the background and have a respect for it, so I do feel vulnerable. As soon as my manager goes, and if his manager goes, they will be thinking who is this woman who is sat on the fringes, what is she doing for us?

14. Advice to Young People

By way of finishing the report of findings from our interviews we end with a short section based on a question to participants about what advice or guidance they would give to young people regarding preparing for paid employment. As was seen in an earlier section, passion was felt to be an important attribute for those engaged in non-standard work. Unsurprisingly, it was also seen as a key attribute for young people, with those interviewed frequently commenting that it was important for them to find something that they felt passionate or enthused about, or that they had a talent for.

I would say get really, really clear about what you love doing. What is your passion, what do you love doing, what do you do that excites you, that thrills you, what is the thing that compels you, and take it from that.

A few people acknowledged that the labour market children would be part of was likely to be very different from the one we have at present. One change signalled by their own experiences at present was that there would be many more non-standard work opportunities. Consequently they wanted their children to be aware that they were unlikely to have a single job or career over their whole working life and that they needed to be prepared and equipped for this.

I think that you shouldn't expect that you are going to go into a job and stay with it for life. So I think that you need to develop skills that are portable ... probably is the most important thing. Skills that you can take to a number of different environments and possibly work on your own.

Another participant suggested that he would advise those leaving school that “you are a business, you have clients”. They should not think like employees and constrain themselves in this way. He felt that the system should encourage children to look after themselves rather than being “dependent institutional addicts”.

Despite the perception that the nature of paid employment was changing, some concerns were raised that schools may not be adequately preparing people for this new environment and, as the above participants submitted, the system was geared to cranking out “institutional addicts”

There was also debate over what sorts of skills – and here we take the terms skills to include expertise, experience and qualifications – might be best. One school of thought preferred a more specific focus. The more common thinking, as intimated in the above quote, suggested that young people should opt for more general skills that could then be applied in a range of settings. Two suggestions that combine aspects of both arguments were that people should get IT or commerce qualifications. This woman explored both options in her comments.

I would definitely encourage [my children] to do something that is more specific to day-to-day work. Most of the people that I went to school with and I have grown up with, the ones that did a general degree, I have found haven't gone so well. ... Then I have friends that went and specifically trained to be a teacher, and an architect, and they've again done very well. But they did a specific focus on education and as I said, my brother and sister have taken the same track. I have people working with me that have business degrees and they find them

very practical and useful and I think that is something I would certainly encourage, if my children wanted to choose a more general path.

Skills could be obtained via formal tertiary study and/or work experience. Some people felt that it was important for young people to have the latter in standard arrangements as a prelude to embarking on any non-standard arrangements. The woman quoted above saw the benefits in working in paid employment for a time before selecting a course of study. This concern for gaining some sort of training or qualifications was widely held, even by those interviewed who had managed to succeed without such a background.

One case illustrates how influential parents' involvement in non-standard work can be for children. This interview was conducted in the presence of the interviewee's teenage daughter and when the questions turned to the subject of this section she offered some unsolicited comments. Prior to her mother starting her own business the daughter had no real conception of this sort of self-employment. In fact, the mother was sure that her daughter and son thought she didn't work at all, since she was always home when they were. However, as they have got older they have seen her working quite demanding schedule of employment (as an independent contractor) and study. They have also gained an appreciation of this form of non-standard work and the positive and negative implications for working this way. As well, they have had first hand experience, albeit from a different perspective, of how it can be integrated with home life. Consequently, the woman reported that:

... both my children want to work for themselves. They are both doing Commerce, one will probably do Commerce and Art and the other Commerce and Law and he wants to buy businesses and sell them off and he probably will to because he has got a very good economic brain. He wants to be his own boss and she does to, although she is very small business minded and more people oriented.

PART III CONCLUDING REMARKS

15. The Paradoxes of Non-Standard Work Forms

This final section of the report reflects on a feature of non-standard work that emerged during the analysis. It is the sense that many non-traditional work forms are characterised by the presence of numerous paradoxes. In our sample this was most frequently, but not exclusively, observed among contractors. It is not our intention to use this brief section to list all these paradoxes, but rather to highlight some that illustrate their clear presence in the lives of those who work in non-standard ways. Using this as a basis, a review of the preceding sections of the report will reveal other paradoxical features of derivative work forms.

The original paradox to emerge from our analysis of the interviews, and which prompted our search for others, was the observation that contractors had to be both specialists and generalists. Businesses specialise to various degrees for all sorts of reasons. Alongside identifying a gap in the market or as a mean of differentiating themselves from others, specialising allows people to make the best use of their particular skills and abilities. However, running a business is not just about performing the core activity. It also involves activities such as marketing and public relations, accounting and finance, and general administration to name just a few. While in larger companies these would usually be carried out by other people and departments, in smaller businesses they are performed or at least managed, by the contractor. Thus, the contractor must be both a specialist and more generally skilled.

Other paradoxes were particularly apparent as we reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of working in alternative arrangements that people described in the interviews. For instance, though some people found the social isolation difficult to cope with, some of this group and others were grateful not to have to be part of office politics or to endure the distractions that working in an office created. That said, working outside organisations allowed people much more freedom and individuality but meant they could no longer easily access networks as well as education and training. Similarly, the flexibility necessary for this type of work that allowed them to juggle their work at times to suit other commitments could also mean that they had to work at times that clashed with such obligations. Indeed working from home was seen both positively and negatively. Finally, though people spoke in various ways of the uncertainty that pervaded this type of work, they seldom if ever wanted to give up working this way. While people often opted to become contractors to exercise greater control over their working lives, this sense of uncertainty often robbed them of aspects of that control.

A range of other areas discussed in this report reveal further paradoxes. Technology opens up many possibilities for working outside of traditional workplaces, and for some

this can mean working from home. However, this can also mean intrusions into times and spaces that were previously separate from work. Many non-standard workers sought to step outside traditional organisational structures. While as outsiders they often felt more valued and could more easily perform certain functions, this status also created obstacles and difficulties. Ironically, alternative ways of working such as telework may create outsiders of those who would usually be considered insiders within an organisation. Though those employed through intermediaries appear in many respects to be insiders, they feel and remain very much on the outside of organisations. The same might also be said of dependent contractors who for this reason are sometimes referred to as de facto employees. Contractors in innovative areas of business may not only struggle to find suitable education and training opportunities but may, ironically, become the teachers rather than the students.

As these examples hopefully illustrate, non-standard work forms are in many ways characterised by paradoxes. Our intention is to go further however. It is to suggest that a key facet of those engaged in alternative work arrangements is their ability to live with and manage such paradoxes.

16. General Summary

The last two decades of the 20th Century have seen major changes in the structure of labour markets and one of the most significant developments has been divergent working arrangements. Furthermore, the incidence of these working arrangements has increased at a greater rate than traditional employment forms. Carroll (1999) has suggested that over half of the New Zealand workforce are non-standard workers. Many labels have been used to describe the different ways of working – for example ‘non-standard work’, ‘alternative working arrangements’, ‘flexible working’, ‘a-typical work’, ‘contingent work’ etc. and what these labels have in common is that they identify working arrangements that are a departure from the traditional way of working for one employer, generally between 9 to 5 with the assumption of ongoing employment.

Like many others (for example Mangan, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000; Carroll, 1999), we could not find a uniform pattern or appropriate definition to explain the working relationships identified in the research. Furthermore, labour market statistics in New Zealand did not adequately reflect the dynamic working relationships and combinations of jobs. To the already crowded literature on defining non-standard work we added the idea that since these different ways of working derive from the standard or predominant pattern, then they might be usefully described as derivative work forms. The term ‘derivative’ easily accommodates the multiple variations on that predominant pattern in addition to capturing the highly fluid nature of contemporary labour markets. More broadly, our research also suggested the idea of life-work mosaics. Life-work mosaics describe the combinations of paid work and other non-paid activities that people are engaged in at any one time. Mosaics imply the combining of pieces, many of which could be different sizes, shapes, colours etc. with variable edges and joins. As such, they can portray the many facets of a person’s life. This mix was very prominent for many of those interviewed.

It has been acknowledged that non-standard workers are a disparate group of people with different labour market capacities and outcomes (Carroll, 1999). While the more economically disadvantaged, marginalized individuals will form part of a later study, this research focused on a group of forty people (19 men and 21 women) in diverse, non-standard working arrangements with either knowledge and/or technology components to their work. The many themes that emerged reflected the relatively privileged, skilled and qualified composition of the sample. While the majority of interviewees were contractors, a number were involved in various other alternative working arrangements including, for instance, holding more than one job, teleworking, and being employed via an intermediary.

Almost two thirds of the sample chose to make *the transition into alternative arrangements*. Various reasons were cited such as, for example, that non-standard work could provide flexibility and autonomy; be a source of important secondary earnings; allow better balancing of work and family responsibilities; be a ‘take-off’ point for a beneficiary; or act as an earning source for post-graduate students. Six participants were *pushed* into derivative work. Some of the reasons for this were retrenchment, immigrants

unable to find permanent employment and family circumstances. A mix of push and pull factors was identified for the remaining cases. While the type of work most people engaged in after a move into some non-standard form of working mirrored their background training, skills and experience, just over a third of those interviewed used this transition as an opportunity to make a complete change in their work activities. Most of the interviewees were satisfied with their alternative working arrangements and very few were contemplating a return to standard employment arrangements.

Certain *attributes or characteristics* were perceived to be important in making this way of working successful. Passion in what people did emerged as the most commonly articulated attribute. Some of the other qualities mentioned were focus, commitment, energy, enthusiasm, self-reliance and self-motivation and the ability to multi-task. The appearance of confidence was a necessary characteristic though some people commented that they appeared more confident than they felt.

Not unexpectedly, alternative work arrangements were usually *structured* very differently from standard work patterns. An exploration of derivative working arrangements revealed a myriad of complex employment relationships. Few replicated the direct relationship with a single employer. Instead many combinations of working roles emerged in the mosaic. One alternative relationship was the indirect or triangular one where people used agencies or contract companies as intermediaries to gain employment. This strategy was also used in conjunction with finding one's own employment. Contractors who sub-contracted for all or part of their work also used intermediaries in this sense. Some participants combined full-time or part-time employment with other non-standard roles, such as contracting, or had various part-time jobs in their employment mosaic. The various mixes of clients or sources of work that contractors drew on was termed their *portfolio* in this study, and portfolios could be open or closed depending on whether contractors were actively seeking new work outside of their current client base. Naturally, the status of open or closed could shift with time and circumstance.

Participants were generally satisfied with their working arrangements. Common was the lack of propensity to return to standard work and in many instances it was a case of not simply being the *only* option but rather the *best* option as so aptly suggested by Cohen et al. (1999:339). People interviewed were satisfied with the hours worked, felt that they had autonomy over the way in which work was carried out and flexibility over where that work was done. They submitted that they worked more intensely and efficiently, and that their work had been enriched. Contracting was often characterised by balancing the roles of specialist and generalist. That is, contractors would structure their business around a set of core activities, carefully differentiate themselves from others, or adopt an innovative approach while at the same time having to provide a full and professional business service to clients.

Non-standard working arrangements were all *managed quite differently* but most of the participants suggested that they could organise their time to best suit their circumstances. Only a few had little control over the hours that they worked. However, like many sole operators, some of the contractors who were interviewed struggled to manage holidays and sickness in traditional ways. It should be stressed here that studies have found that the degree of flexibility is very dependent on the type of non-standard work. For many less skilled, inexperienced workers there is no choice. For most of the participants, this flexibility also extended to where the work would be done. Again, it has been suggested that there is a distinct polarisation between the more and less skilled non-standard workers.

When compared to the standard employment pattern alternative work arrangements generated diverse *interactions between home and work*. Where participants worked at home most of the time there was a greater blending and blurring of home and work life with indistinct boundaries. Not only physical space but also technology contributed to this. Mobiles rang at any time and the fax went at all hours. Very different strategies were employed to manage the blurring between home and work but it seemed that ensuring a balance between life and work, creating boundaries, and developing routines and rules were not uncommon approaches. In general, however, it was found that the weakening of the boundaries between home and work was often appealing to those who had chosen non-standard work.

Many *advantages* were articulated. In almost all of the cases, participants earned a higher hourly return than they might have in 'traditional' employment. As mentioned before, flexibility and autonomy were advantages allowing for an easier integration of home and work life. Having their work recognised – both materially and emotionally – was a positive benefit to some interviewees. One participant referred to the importance of this 'psychological well-being' which he felt that alternative arrangements could bring. This very often outweighed the negative aspects this way of working might have. In addition the variety of challenges was an appeal in having various employment roles. The lack of office politics and interruptions was mentioned by many of those interviewed.

Not unexpectedly, one of the main *disadvantages* was the feeling of uncertainty due to the unpredictability of workflows. Importantly, how people viewed this means it cannot simply be seen as insecurity in the traditional sense, since people felt uncertain about workflows but secure in other respects. Indeed, over 70 percent were confident of ongoing employability in the medium term and over 80 percent in the long-term. Unsurprisingly, then, uncertainty was not enough to tempt people back into permanent employment and people seemed to grow used to living with it over time. However, it did affect participants' ability to plan ahead and take time off and unpredictable workflows, especially for contractors, often placed heavy concentrated demands on people and affected their home-life. Isolation was mentioned and, whereas the lack of interruptions was seen as an advantage by some participants, many submitted that they missed the casual office interactions. Holding more than one form of paid employment could also have negative impacts.

One of the strongest findings on the subject of *education and training* was that this group has moved from a qualification-based approach to a knowledge orientation. The ongoing acquisition of knowledge, rather than qualifications, was critical to successfully running their business. Furthermore, appropriate educational opportunities were hard to find.

Not surprisingly, everyone interviewed made some use of *technology*, which is an increasing feature of non-standard work and enhances this way of working. Over half of the sample could be termed teleworkers, and 40 percent of the businesses were technology-based. Aside from the uses of technology for the business, technology was used in a myriad of ways – for example, websites for advertising, training, information gathering, communication, networking and getting paid.

Networks were essential to working this way: “its not what you know, it’s not even who you know, it’s who knows you.” They were seen as vital in identifying and gaining employment/contracts thus obviating the need to for advertising and marketing. They were also seen to be a vital way of obtaining information. Having active networks was one way of overcoming or reducing the feelings of isolation. Many participants had to deliberately work at networking and found this difficult, though having a business partner seemed to make networking easier as the ‘burden’ was shared.

Collaborations and associations were extremely important given that many of the contractors interviewed had specialist skills. By forming associations for specific projects, and often only for the duration of that project, they had access to the widest range of skills and expertise without having to employ others. One participant referred to this as a ‘virtual team’. Furthermore, most employed the services of accountants and/or lawyers to ensure the smooth running of their businesses.

Various issues regarding the *regulatory environment* were raised. These spanned many negative to some positive comments. Comments were made about the lack of flexibility in legislation which was tailored to large companies rather than taking into account small businesses which formed the majority of New Zealand businesses. Some people also believed that the regulatory environment was failing to cater for the growth in non-standard employment. Comments were made about the high levels of taxation and the tax structure. Some of the contractors chose not to employ staff, or grow their businesses, because of the provisions in the Labour Relations Act. OSH and ACC were also seen as hindrances to employing others. The ownership of intellectual property was mentioned given the more complicated employment relationships that are emerging. It should be noted that the level of complaint regarding the regulatory and legislative environment was variable – only a small group were extremely vocal, with most raising muted concerns. Others accepted and were content to work within the existing legislative environment. Some confessed to little knowledge of or interest in it. Many of those interviewed made use of support services for sound professional advice, with some keenly recommending this to anyone in non-standard work arrangements.

Several of those interviewed faced the issue of being an *outsider* in relation to the company they were working in at a particular time. The culture of the company and the

skills and approach of the outside worker were important factors in how this was managed. Interestingly, in the case of a woman who had worked for a company for a number of years, it now seemed that in particular ways teleworking was making her an outsider, thus presenting interesting challenges for employers and those working in non-standard ways.

We concluded the interviews by asking what *advice or guidance* participants would give young people in preparation for the world of work. Again, the word ‘passion’ emerged as a key attribute for young people. A few people suggested that children should be aware that they were unlikely to have a single job or career over their lives. Concerns were raised about the inadequacy of schools in preparing people for this changing environment. Children should be taught to look after and think for themselves rather than being, as one participant commented, ‘dependent organisational addicts’.

From our research there is even more evidence that non-standard forms of employment are a disparate collection of employment relations and cannot be reduced to a single pattern or characters. Also apparent from this research are the various *paradoxes* that characterise derivative ways of working – for instance, the need to be a specialist and a generalist; the co-presence of uncertainty and security; or the costs and benefits of working in isolation and working from home. This research has canvassed the experiences of relatively privileged men and women with the skills, characteristics and resources enabling them to benefit from the relative flexibility and autonomy that these alternative work forms can bring. The ongoing, and ever increasing, changes to working relationships have numerous and significant implications that require consideration. Aspects of these are discussed in the next chapter.

17. Implications

There are numerous implications of having an increasing proportion of the workforce employed in non-standard ways. Given their social and economic impact, they are of interest to a wide range of groups and people. These are played out in the short and longer terms and at various levels. While the focus of the report thus far has been on the individual and family implications, this section moves to a wider perspective though the discussion remains at a general level.

These larger questions centre on what the implications might be for work and society more generally if the proliferation of derivative work forms continues, thereby accounting for a greater proportion of the workforce? It has been suggested by Betcherman et al. (1996:7), amongst others, that the spread of non-standard work, while potentially beneficial to specific groups in the economy who are experienced and skilled, has potentially far-reaching and unwelcome implications for many outside those groups. These are the workers at the other end of the scale from those who formed our sample. This polarisation of experiences can be illustrated by a simple example from our study. As has been reported, we found that the alternative ways of working generally had a positive impact on the families of the relatively privileged by opening up opportunities to combine paid and unpaid work in creative ways. This is in stark contrast to the potential threats to family well-being that might face the most contingent workers where guarantees of employment are non-existent.

Even within the parameters of our sample group, wider implications can be discerned regarding the impacts on workforce and labour market dynamics and constitution given the growing numbers of professional, knowledge-based workers who are engaging in derivative forms of work. Many of them entered contracting, for instance, based on the growing acceptance and preference for this type of relationship by many organisations. Though the number of own-account contractors increases, statistics show that the number of those employing others decreases. Both trends have implications for those entering the labour market. While the lack of 'traditional' jobs might be seen as simply forcing them into non-standard ways of working, new entrants are disadvantaged by not being able to get the necessary work experience to adequately equip themselves for alternative ways of working.

This report has signalled other implications and the remainder of this section provides a brief overview of these. They are considered in the areas of information, education, workplaces, and legislation. As well, running throughout the report has been our concerns regarding how derivative work forms are variously defined. It would be useful to have some shared understandings underpinning the literature and statistical databases. Certainly, without this, making meaningful international comparisons is often difficult. Clearly this is a problem in itself as well as a confounding issue in relation to data collection and analysis.

Increasingly it is becoming evident that the available statistics provide only a limited contribution to effectively portraying and understanding the labour market as existing

data do not always reflect its complex make up and changing dynamics. For example, the HLFS (Household Labour Force Statistics) in New Zealand do not provide information for casual workers and those on contract. Given the significance of casual employment in New Zealand (Mangan, 2000), this information would give a more accurate reflection of the current labour market trends. The burgeoning numbers of workers who are engaged in derivative working arrangements reinforce the need for an expanded range of labour market indicators. This will generate a more accurate picture of the current labour market, improve our knowledge of its operation, and better inform the development of policy. Callister (1997), amongst others, agrees that the lack of official data series is particularly evident in New Zealand.

Given the importance of skills and the increasing relevance of a more flexible and responsive learning system, greater participation in alternative working arrangements creates challenges to the *education system*. At a broad level, one must ask if young people are aware of the shifting patterns of employment and whether they are being adequately prepared for the changing work environment? Given that change and uncertainty, as well as increased individual risk and responsibility are inherent in this environment, a lack of adequate awareness and preparation could adversely affect young people's expectations and their ability to cope in the world of work. Thus, education providers should continuously reflect on the relevance of their curricula to recognise the increasing importance of the ongoing acquisition of knowledge and the strategies required to gain this knowledge. Tertiary providers may also need to evaluate the match between the content and delivery of programmes, and the requirements of those who are working outside standard arrangements.

The increased incidence of flexible, derivative work forms and externalising activities has implications for *workplaces* and strategies of staffing practices. New forms of employee relations in the workplace might need consideration as the systems in place are still tailored to the more structured, traditional forms of employment. Kalleberg (2000) suggests that research is needed on the 'bundle' of practices that employers use to accomplish their staffing requirements. Those businesses that engage large numbers of people in alternative work arrangements might also want to consider their policies and practises in terms of how these outsiders are integrated into the company. This would mean examining a wide range of issues from the very practical, such as access to information, through to less tangible but no less important areas, such as staff attitudes and culture towards contractors. Greater understanding of the motives, costs and benefits of organisations engaging more people in non-standard arrangements

Given the increasing combinations and fluidity of working relationships, is the current *regulatory environment* flexible and responsive enough? For instance, the emergence of triangular relationships that are so evident in the mosaic of derivative working relationships can provide challenges to current labour laws and employee relations. Kalleberg (2000) suggests that recognition should be given to the opportunities and challenges provided by co-employment and joint employer arrangements. In this study not only were some employed by temporary help agencies, but also by other companies or contractors to do work on their behalf. A study is currently underway on the

experiences of temporary office workers in the Auckland area. Another interesting aspect to triangular relationships is who owns intellectual property given that at least three parties can be involved at any one time.

While many of the participants in this sample wanted less, rather than more, regulation the challenge is in accommodating greater flexibility for groups such as contractors and employers whilst providing some protection for the more contingent non-standard workers. In Canada, for example, the government has set itself the goal of devising a new set of labour market requirements that ensure that all workers, irrespective of working arrangements, are given access to a basic set of employment conditions regarding, for example, income equity and training (Mangan, 1999:59). This becomes increasingly relevant when more vulnerable non-standard workers are considered. Even when minimum entitlements and protections exist, by falling outside of the mainstream of employment arrangements, those in non-standard forms of work can be excluded. Take the introduction of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme, for example. Since eligibility is only for those in paid employment with a single employer for 10 or more hours per week for a year before due birth or adoption (EEO Trust, November 2001), where does that leave casual employees working for more than one employer? While it admittedly becomes difficult to cater for every variation on the more standard employment arrangements, one-size-fits-all policies might require investigation and revision and more account needs to be taken of the growing proportion of people who are employed in derivative work forms.

18. Future Research

This study has provided the Labour Market Dynamics Research Team with a snapshot of the myriad ways in which derivative, or non-standard working arrangements are structured in the Auckland area. Our aims were to examine the significance of changing working arrangements and to explore individual experiences in working this way. Implications for the household, education and training and implications that the changing work patterns might have on social and economic policy making emerged. This study was limited to participants with a knowledge and/or technology focus which meant that our interest was with those who are relatively privileged, skilled and qualified as opposed to the economically disadvantaged marginalized individuals. Consequently, future research will address the experiences of the contingent workers.

To expand the snapshot of non-standard work, and to provide a comparison between two different labour markets, a study into alternative working arrangements amongst a sample of men and women similar to those in the Auckland study is being conducted in the Hawkes Bay.

In addition, to further illustrate the diverse and ever-increasing impact of alternative and emerging work forms, members of the research team are currently conducting studies into the employment experiences of temporary female office workers in the Auckland area as well as those of two professional groups, namely, accountants and midwives. The experiences of the above three groups will provide interesting, and potentially different, insights into aspects of derivative working that will have important policy implications.

To provide a more in-depth, overall perspective, an investigation is underway into the data availability, data requirements and methodologies required for undertaking a quantitative evaluation of non-standard work in New Zealand.

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