

Productivity Research Summary

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Method

Literature review & competitive research analysis

Process

Step 1: Planning

We began by discussing the domains in which productivity is typically prioritized, measured, and evaluated and found that we were drawn to overlooked domains like people's personal lives. With that in mind, we identified a handful of [sub-topics](#), divided them amongst the group, and began our research.

Step 2: Research

We leveraged Google and UW's online research portal to find sources on a range of topics related to productivity. Key word searches lead us to a few especially helpful sources, including: Journal of Productivity, Procrastination Research Group at Carleton University, Frontiers in Psychology, and the CHI database. We took notes on our findings and in one case decided to compile a competitor analysis.

Step 3: Synthesis

We met as a group to share our findings and identify themes. Each of us had been drawn to research that centered emotions as central to the understanding of productivity, including research on procrastination, emotional regulation, and personal perceptions of productive output. The research highlights below are organized under these sub-topics.

Synthesized Research Notes

Procrastination

- Poor time management is often considered to be a precursor to procrastination and a major barrier to productivity. Consequently, interventions to help people improve procrastination are often focused on managing time more effectively ([Procrastination Problem?](#)).
- However, researchers have identified that, often, misregulation of negative emotions is the underlying cause of procrastination ([Procrastination Problem?](#)) ([Attributions of Responsibility and Blame for Procrastination Behavior](#)).
- In this sense, procrastination is used as a coping mechanism allowing people to avoid tasks, and in turn, avoid the negative feelings associated with those tasks ([Procrastination Problem?](#)).

- In addition to added stress resulting from time-constraints because of the delay in accomplishing a task, procrastination can also lead to other negative feelings such as self-blame ([Procrastination Problem?](#)) ([Attributions of Responsibility and Blame for Procrastination Behavior](#)).
- Procrastination is also understood to take place when people place a cognitive focus on their their present self, rather than acting in the interest of their future self ([Attributions of Responsibility and Blame for Procrastination Behavior](#))
- Research suggests that addressing negative emotional regulation may be a more effective route to mitigating procrastination and improving productivity than commonly prescribed methods, such as improving time management strategies or eliminating distractions ([Procrastination Problem?](#)).

Emotional Regulation

- Those who have stronger emotional regulation skills are less prone to procrastination because they are able to confront tasks even when they bring about negative emotions.
- Researchers have found that happiness is often correlated with productivity ([Happiness & Productivity](#)).
- Employees work at their best and are more productive when they're given the flexibility to balance their work and personal lives.
- While this link exists, expending time and resources in an attempt to increase workers' happiness is costly and time-consuming, and may not be feasible from a business standpoint ([Happiness & Productivity](#)).
- Most existing tools in the market are designed to help people track their productivity to improve self-awareness, which could lead to enhanced productivity.
- Also, productivity tools tend to encourage people to start small, then help them to build new habits of longer periods of focused work time.

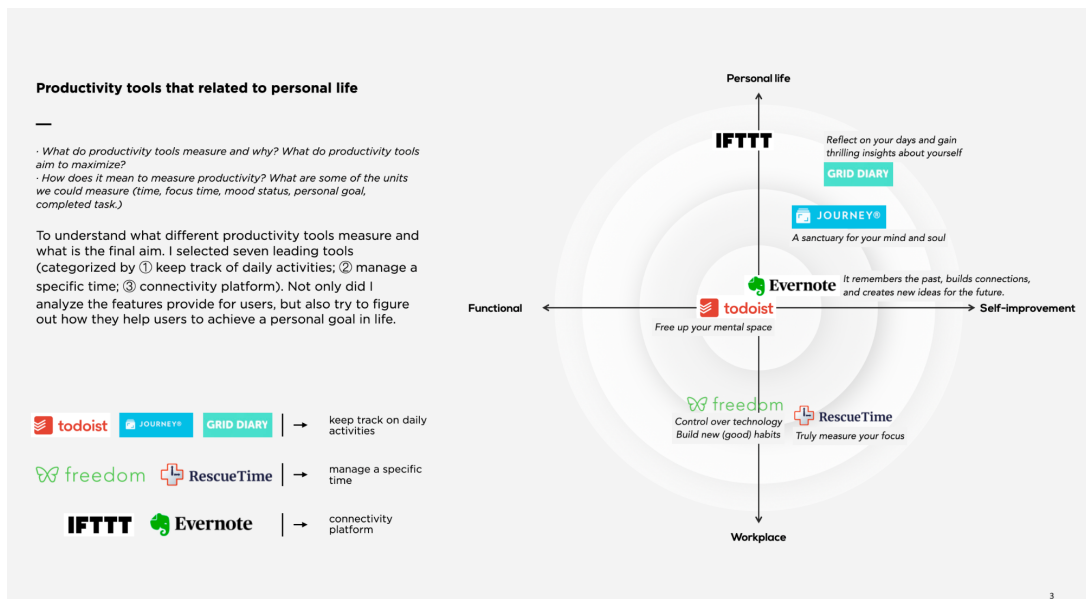
Personal Perceptions

- Generally, "Productive" has been defined as worthwhile or fulfilling, but perceptions around what is considered productivity is far from universal, varying significantly across individuals and industries.
- People in knowledge based work considered the quality of their output very important, with their idea of productivity taking into account the conceptuality of their output vs the quantity or objectiveness.
- Physical and Emotional states also deeply affect how people interpret their level of productivity.
- People feel more productive when they can concentrate, and less so when they are distracted.
- Chores were usually deemed insignificant and therefore least productive, but significant tasks were given more weight.
- People deemed tasks they enjoyed to be very productive
 - If you don't enjoy a task they were more likely to get distracted
- Overcoming procrastination and engaging in self regulatory tasks were deemed very productive

- Social and spiritual development were deemed productive
- Much of work takes place outside of digital devices, which productivity apps typically focused on
 - Much of productivity takes place outside of 9 - 6

Insights & Opportunities for Further Research

We understand users' needs from the features that existing tools provide through a competitive analysis. Also, based on our research findings, we could figure out what is missing and how our future solution is different from those tools in marketing positioning.



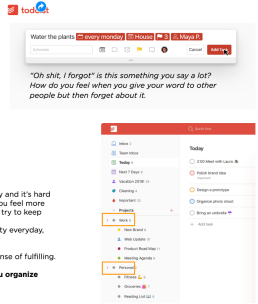
To understand what different productivity tools measure and what is the final aim. We selected seven leading tools (categorized by ① keep track of daily activities; ② manage a specific time; ③ connectivity platform).

From competitor analysis, we see a growing body of productivity tools designed to help people improve self-awareness. They understand that emotional states have a critical impact on productivity. Even like [IFTTT](#), a powerful connective platform, it connects, integrates, and automates your favorite apps and devices. Users would also use it to set up some simple daily quote notifications like hourly “smile” to keep positive. However, even though they understand people’s emotional states directly corresponding to productivity, most of the tools unsolved the root of issues. For example, tools like "[freedom](#)" and "[RescueTime](#)" simply block websites/ apps for specific sessions to allow them to work better at the focused time. Also, other types of productivity, like "[todoist](#)," track your daily activity every day and send notifications to users to prepare for work, then visualize the completed tasks to make people feel more productive. These have not solved the root of the problem around productivity. We should rethink how productivity tools should be designed to incorporate some of the themes around procrastination, emotional regulation perceptions.

Appendix

Competitive analysis

Helps you set productivity goals and keep track of them, staying organized



Remember everything all for you, help to run personal life

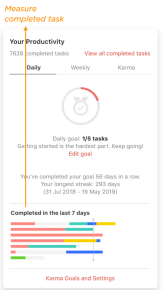
People have so much things to do in a day and it's hard to remember everything. The app makes you feel more control of your life since you don't need to try to keep track of everything in your head.

day-by-day setting, track your daily activity everyday, and never lose track of an important task.

make real progress towards your goal.

view the completed tasks would give a sense of fulfilling.

Aim: Free up your mental space, helps you organize every task, regain clarity and calmness.



Helps you have a calmer mind by filling it with positive energy and healthy thinking

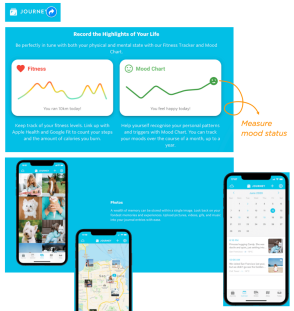
Keep track everything all for you

You can only have a productive life if your mind is 100% ready to become productive.

Keeps track of your fitness and mood chart to showcase your overall well-being.

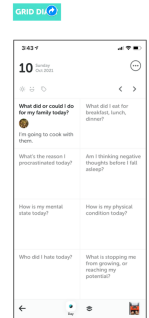
Plan for the week or month and keep track of the entries you have been making.

Aim: Create a healthier, happier mind. It works as your happiness trainer that makes you more productive through self-improvement.



Measure mood status

use prompts to help you reflect on your days and gain thrilling insights about yourself.

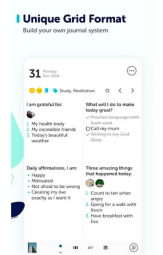


Guided writing

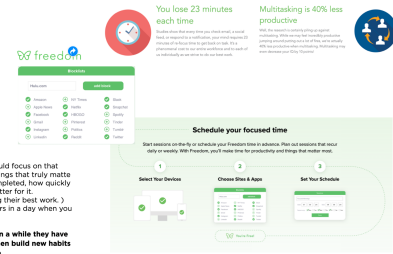
Engaging prompts help you dig deep and uncover new areas of appreciation in your life. there is a special spot to write down your small victories day by day, a daily planner, health and physical state, personal growth, career, finance, family relationship and even more.

Grid Diary combines weekly, monthly and yearly diary, enables you to build your own journal and planner system.

Aim: Start a more aware lifestyle and become happier day by day. So you could get new insights into your life and carry a more aware lifestyle.



Block Websites/apps for specific sessions to help make productivity a habit.



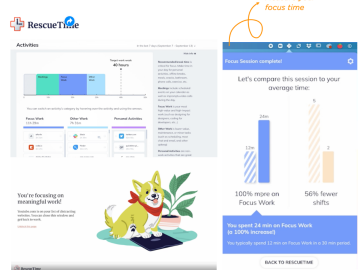
Schedule people's focused time

Manage distractions so that people could focus on that matter most to them. Prioritizing the things that truly matter is not about how many tasks you completed, how quickly or well you did it, but rather if you're better for it. (Distractions prevent people from doing their best work.)

- makes you feel like you have extra hours in a day when you so concentrate to accomplish a task.

Aim: to let people have a feeling of it a while they have control over technology. Start small, then build new habits of longer periods of focused work time.

truly measure your focus (digital devices only)



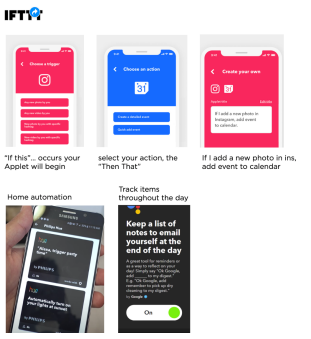
Measure people's focus time

Design a daily Focus Work Goal for you by assessing your work style and meeting schedule. When you trigger a Focus Session, RescueTime backs the sites that most negatively impact your focus.

A smart coaching throughout the day keeps you on track.

Aim: help to discover distracting habits and change them, achieve more in less time spent at work and implicitly regain time to rejuvenate and have a life outside of work

Connect, integrate, and automate your favorite apps and devices.



Control everything around you

Make your life smarter and more automated

IFTTT is the free way to get all your apps and devices talking to each other.

Log a list of notes/things you want to do.

Extend the functionality of Google Home device

Work as a personal assistant helps anything you might want to control or be controlled by something else.