Logging R&D Time On or Off ReaDI-Watch: How to Decide

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Every team already has habits around how work gets tracked. The practical decision is where R&D time should be captured: directly inside ReaDI-Watch, imported from the tools employees already use, or a bit of both. There's a defensible answer for each of these approaches when the data is complete and attributable. The right choice depends on how work is performed, the structure of existing records, and the level of governance the claim requires.

The spectrum of options

At one end is native daily capture. Employees log time directly against R&D work packages in ReaDI-Watch, creating a clear link between the person, date, and activity as the work progresses.

At the other end is periodic import from existing systems. Time is recorded in project, ticketing, or billing tools, then exported and mapped into an R&D structure in ReaDI-Watch. Sitting between these options is a semi-real-time model in which existing tools remain in place and data flows into ReaDI-Watch on a regular cadence.

The highest-risk option is retrospective reconstruction based on broad percentage estimates per person or period. It can serve as a temporary measure, but it provides less detail and relies heavily on memory and later judgement.

How to decide

The decision comes down to a few concrete factors, not a general preference for "integrated" or "flexible."

What tools are already embedded in daily workflow? If a team already lives in a specific project or ticketing tool, forcing a second, parallel logging habit tends to fail through simple disuse. Direct integration is usually worth the setup cost for tools that are genuinely central to daily work.

How standard is the existing export format? Well-known tools with common export formats are straightforward to map into an R&D structure. Bespoke or unusual internal tools may need a one-off, AI-assisted mapping exercise the first time, after which the mapping can typically be reused.

How much governance oversight does the work need? Teams under tighter regulatory scrutiny, or working across jurisdictions with stricter contemporaneous-record expectations, generally benefit from native, work-package-linked logging rather than periodic imports, as the audit trail is simply cleaner.

DECISION POINT	NO	YES
1. Is R&D work already tracked in a tool the team uses every day?	Capture time directly in ReaDI-Watch	↓
2. Does that tool record complete, attributable data by person, date, and activity?	Capture time directly in ReaDI-Watch	↓
3. Can the data be exported and mapped reliably into ReaDI-Watch?	Use native capture, or create a one-off mapping process	Use a regular import or integration

A decision chart for time tracking inside/outside of ReaDI

What this means in practice

There is no single correct answer to on-platform or off-platform logging. For example, one anonymised client records time and expenses inside its R&D platform while applying rates and completing year-end reconciliation in separate finance systems. This hybrid arrangement has clear boundaries around where each part of the process happens.

The objective is a complete and traceable record. ReaDI-Watch works well with native capture, structured imports, or a combination of both, provided the final data preserves attribution, review history, and a reliable connection between technical work and cost.