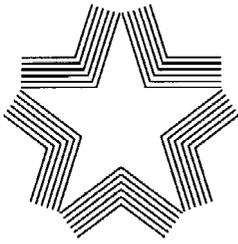


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Big brother may be watching every keystroke. New software makes it possible for employers to view in real time or record exactly what tasks a user is performing and what keystrokes he or she is entering. Employers will be able to tell what memos employees write, what e-mails they send—monitor every keystroke (*The New York Times*, August 27, 1998, p E3).

While the storm clouds gather you can get the latest hurricane information at: www.nhc.noaa.gov. For more general severe weather information, try the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Web page: www.fema.gov. ("Federal Computer Week," August 31, 1998, pp 32 and 36).

Have you heard you will be able to buy U.S. Treasury bills, notes and bonds over the Internet? The new service is called "Buy Direct." It requires users to have an existing account with Treasury; funds are automatically transferred from the purchaser's bank account. Once an investor has an existing account, the investor can visit <http://www.publicdebt.treas.gov> to make a transaction. ("Government Computer News," September 7, 1998, p 16).

Congratulations to the Social Security Administration, recipient of the Siemens Award for Excellence for its use of devices that help disabled SSA employees. The agency plans to use the \$35,000 award for future assistive technologies to hire disabled workers ("Government Computer News," September 21, 1998, p 20).

Wouldn't a free, open, computer operating system be nice? "Linux" is an operating system developed by Linus Torvald of Helsinki, Finland. He made it available free of charge, and thousands of volunteer programmers refined it. Users can download, modify, and share it. Even proponents don't claim it is a panacea, but on a scale from 0 to 5 with 5 being completely satisfied, IS managers and directors in large organizations show Linux getting 3.80; Solaris with 3.70; HP-UX with 3.60; NetWare at 3.55, and NT at 3.50 ("Software Magazine," September 1998, pp 6, 32-44). And the code itself is free; "if something needs to be fixed, a decent programmer can get inside it, fix it, and share the results" (*Inter@ctive Week*, "September 14, 1998, p 18).

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