

## “IS BIG BROTHER WATCHING YOU?”

In the George Orwell classic “1984”, the inhabitants of a fictional totalitarian State are under 24 hours surveillance by the authorities, and they are constantly reminded that “Big Brother is watching you”. Today, like it or not, many organizations undertake surveillance of their workforce. But if a company pays people to work then shouldn’t they have the right to monitor the work that’s being done?

### SMILE FOR THE CAMERA?

Surveillance is a part of modern life. Like it or not, in many countries reality is that you are being monitored already! In the UK there is an estimated one camera for every 14 people or 4,000,000 in the country. In the U.S.A. video surveillance systems have been installed in Baltimore, Chicago, and New Orleans, and New York City already has over 3,000 cameras and is in the process of also installing a more extensive system. In Canada there is an exponential growth in the use of video surveillance.<sup>i</sup> Smiling for the cameras is already a part of your everyday life.

### QUIET, I’M ON THE PHONE!

In early March, 2006, it emerged that in the U.S.A., the National Security Agency has amassed a massive database of secretly recorded phone call records of tens of millions of Americans, using data provided by AT&T, Verizon and BellSouth. The government has detailed phone records for the customers of these companies, and these are analyzed for call patterns.<sup>ii</sup>

### PRIVACY RIGHTS

**“Employers want to be sure their employees are doing a good job, but employees don't want their every sneeze or trip to the water cooler logged. That's the essential conflict of workplace monitoring.” (Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, 2006)<sup>iii</sup>**

According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse in the U.S.A., because the employer owns the computers and the network generally they are free to use them to monitor employees.

## CAN'T YOU SEE I'M WORKING?

Recent surveys in the U.S.A. have found that a majority of employers already use some form of monitor their employees. A 2005 survey by the American Management Association<sup>iv</sup> found that:

- **76% of employers monitor their employees' web site visits**
- **65% use software to block inappropriate surfing**
- **55% retain and review emails**
- **50% store and review user's electronic files**
- **36% track work content, keystrokes and time spent on the keyboard**

Over 80% of employers disclose their monitoring practices to employees.

## MEASURING, NOT JUST MONITORING, THAT'S BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE!

Software programs used to electronically monitor employees focus on security and compliance issues. They work like video recorders capturing verbatim the content of every transaction. They monitor but they don't measure the quantity of work performance.

The unique Prodyx PDX solution measures work performance without an invasion of privacy because only the quantity and quality of the work being done is measured. With this approach the manager knows how much keying, correcting and mousing a person has done without knowing the content of what has been typed or clicked, and this solution is not adware or spyware. The powerful data capture capabilities of this business intelligence tool provide managers with essential information on employee performance that helps them to identify and troubleshoot any problems, to test and evaluate alternative ideas and interventions, and to improve corporate performance and profitability.

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<sup>i</sup> Wikipedia, (2007) Closed-circuit television.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed-circuit\\_television](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed-circuit_television)

<sup>ii</sup> USA Today (2006) NSA has massive database of Americans' phone calls, May, 11,  
[http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-05-10-nsa\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-05-10-nsa_x.htm)

<sup>iii</sup> Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (2006) Employee Monitoring: Is There Privacy in the Workplace? February,  
<http://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs7-work.htm>

<sup>iv</sup> AMA (2005) 2005 Electronic Monitoring and Surveillance Survey,  
[http://www.amanet.org/research/pdfs/EMS\\_summary05.pdf](http://www.amanet.org/research/pdfs/EMS_summary05.pdf).