

# tools of the trade



SWISSMEMORY® USB Victorinox

## Handy Memory

It was bound to happen in a world filled with thumb drives and keychain, pen, and wristwatch USB drives. Victorinox, maker of the classic all-in-one Swiss Army Knife, has teamed up with Swissbit to produce the SWISSMEMORY® USB Victorinox. There are two versions: one that you can carry onto an airplane and another that has to stay home. One has a stainless steel knife, scissors, a file, and a screwdriver; the other doesn't. But both have a 64 MB or 128 MB USB memory device as well as a pressurized pen and a red LED laser pointer. The USB drive will store any kind of data, photos, mp3 audio files, or presentations. An LED lights up when the drive is active, and you can securely lock the files with its Secure-LOCK software. The USB part of the knife can be removed to make it easier to use or to switch it to upgrade the device. Or

you can just take the USB drive if your combination tool would be confiscated on a plane. The SWISSMEMORY is available from Victorinox retailers or from the Swissbit Online-Shop at [www.swissbit.com](http://www.swissbit.com).

The Sony Micro Vault looks like any other slip-cased USB pocket memory drive. But in the wrong hands, anyone's but yours, it just won't work. That's because there's a built-in fingerprint scanner that can lock down files on the drive as well as access to your computer and websites. The Micro Vault holds 128 MB and runs at the faster USB 2.0 speed. It comes with a docking station and software that offers a number of locking functions. When you set it up, you select a single finger to register with the software, or you can use several or all of your fingers and the two digits (thumbs). The software will ask for several im-

pressions so it can read different angles and pressures. You then can lock up a portion or all of the 128 MB on the device using a slider to select a public and an encrypted area. The public area is accessible on any standard USB input, but the encrypted area requires the use of the very small docking station. Other functions are also available with the software. You can set up your PC so that when the screensaver comes on, only your fingerprint will unlock the screen. Handy for when you're away from your desk. A right click on files on your PC's hard drive gives you the option to lock any of them down with access only with your fingerprint or backup password. The password is useful on those occasions when you forget to bring in the drive. You can also lock down sites like your bank or bookseller's sites so that verification to get you in is done with the



Sony Micro Vault

touch of a (registered) finger. More information is available at <http://www.sony-asia.com/microvault/>, and you can purchase the Micro Vault at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other retailers.

## Handy Scanner

Scanners are usually the size of a printer, and they lay claim to a fair amount of space on your desktop. There are smaller, pen-shaped scanners, but these usually are swiped like a magic marker over text and numbers, one line at a time, and they don't capture images. The Docu-Pen™ from Planon

## Technology and Us vs. Them ◆ Michael Castelluccio, Editor

■ THE EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP has been made a little more uncomfortable by the numerous technologies that improve monitoring. In a recent editorial, Maryfran Johnson, editor-in-chief of *Computerworld*, explained the polarities involved. "Strategically, today's business and regulatory climate demand audit-worthy efforts to safeguard information." On the other hand, she writes, "What worries me about Big Brother IT isn't just the thankless nature of employee monitoring but the ultimate futility of it. Enterprises are becoming more porous every day."

Because e-mail has become such a security problem, from leaks to viruses to conduits for harassment, every employee should assume that all e-mail is subject to review. But when you add keystroke capture devices, browser monitoring, telephone listening, and tracking your

movement around the building via smart cards, or even smart clothing, issued by the company, you might begin to get the creepy feeling that, in the words of the old ballad, "you owe your soul to the company store." All but the last of these technologies, smart clothing, are already common in the workplace. Clothing with circuitry woven into the fabric has been experimented with in Brussels (funded by Adidas, Levi Strauss, and Samsonite), in Germany (Infineon Technologies AG), and here at home at Georgia Tech. It's likely on the way.

### Whose Rights?

The assumption that there are limited rights to privacy in the workplace has lost its clear edges as technology extends its reach. In his book, *The Naked Employee—How*

*continued on next page*

**System Solutions, Inc.**, is a wand-shaped, full-page portable scanner that is one-half inch longer than a wooden pencil. It weighs about two ounces and scans a full page of text and/or images in four sec-

onds. A slower sweep down the page will give you a higher-quality image (100 dpi at four seconds and 200 dpi at a slower scan). It's battery powered so you don't need a computer to do your scans, and the 2MB memory is flash type, capable of 100 pages, so even if the batteries fail between scans before downloading to your PC, the scans aren't lost. In the three views below, side, middle, and bottom, you

can see the on button in the middle of the wand. Press once for a lower resolution scan, twice for high-res, and the LED indicator light at the end reminds you what mode you're working in. The rollers on the bottom of the device help track straight scans. ScanSoft's PaperPort OCR software is included to connect to word processing and image handling programs. The USB connection plugs in the end of the unit to transfer files. [www.planon.com](http://www.planon.com)

available, eight-inch and four-inch, in color and metallic tones, and three stand styles, including one made of cherry wood. With a touch you can make it spin on its electromagnetic axis. Available at [www.everygadget.com](http://www.everygadget.com).



DocuPen Scanner



Levitating Desktop Globe

**The Levitating Desktop Globe** uses the same technology as the bullet trains, floating the world sphere between electromagnetic fields. There are two sizes

*continued from p. 59*

*Technology Is Compromising Workplace Privacy*, Frederick Lane examines a wide variety of technologies used by employers as well the reasons for the surveillance. A lawyer, Lane also discusses the other dimension of the problem—the one that extends beyond the workplace. “The most perturbing development is the growing erasure of any distinction between work and home. The challenge that we face today is not so much how to protect privacy in the workplace—that can best be described as a cultural Maginot line that has long since been circumvented—but how to protect the personal and household privacy of people who are also workers.”

*The Naked Employee* is an interesting book, partially because there is a great deal of confusion in the legislation and case law that relate to privacy. And technology is proving to be the bare wire carrying way too much current for anyone’s comfort.

The book begins with many of the good reasons for investigative screening of applicants and surveillance of employees. There’s the tort of “negligent hiring” that makes an employer liable when they hire someone who has violent or criminal tendencies and who should have been discovered as a threat through a reasonable check of their background. The tort of “negligent retention” is a variation of the same theme relating to people you shouldn’t have kept around. There’s the estimate that 80% of résumés contain lies. A U.S. Department of Labor study in 2001 estimated that “workplace drug use costs employers \$75 to \$100 billion per year in lost employee work time, accidents, healthcare costs, and workers’ compensation claims.” Internal e-mails have proved to be disas-

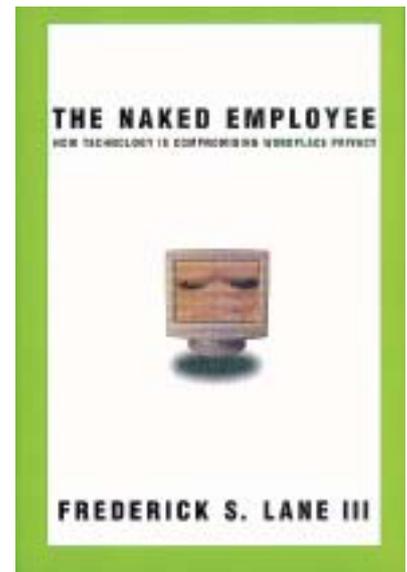
trous for some corporations in recent litigation. A single employee carrying a purloined hard drive out of the building could compromise months of R&D or a fortune in intellectual property. And so on. The employer has not only the right but the obligation to protect assets, plans, and also his or her employees.

The book ends with a review of legislation and cases. Lane covers two general areas: existing limits on pre-employment inquiries (Fair Labor Standards Act, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Fair Credit Reporting Act, Employee Polygraph Protection Act, Americans with Disabilities Act) and legal limits on workplace surveillance (Constitutional protections, The National Labor Relations Act, Electronic Communications Privacy Act, The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). He then looks at three proposed bills that never became law but did offer the beginning of a solution. The first two, The Privacy for Consumers and Workers Act (proposed by former Sen. Paul Simon and former Rep. Pat Williams) and the later, simplified version titled The Notice of Electronic Monitoring Act (proposed by Sen. Charles Schumer (D.-N.Y.) and former Rep. Charles Canaday), both failed.

#### **An Employee Bill of Rights**

Frederick Lane does include a list of suggestions that he calls An Employee Bill of Rights. The list attempts to balance the employer’s right to collect certain types of information about their employees and the right of employees to maintain certain levels of privacy. It includes:

- ◆ Opt-in Requirements for Collection of Information. (Employers should obtain specific, informed consent from employees, letting them know: the nature and scope of



information being sought; the sources for the information; the methods used to collect the information; and the specific, work-related purposes for seeking the information.)

- ◆ Disclosure of Surveillance.
- ◆ Limiting the Casual and Unauthorized Spread of Employee Information.
- ◆ Restricting the Misuse of Employee Medical Information. (Avoiding past abuses such as using medical information to make employment decisions.)
- ◆ Requiring Reasonable Suspicion for Drug Testing.
- ◆ Preserving the Boundary Between Work and Home.
- ◆ Establishing a Means for Enforcement.

As the technologies used in the workplace improve, the opportunities for surveillance will increase. If your work cellphone has a GPS system embedded in it, you’ll be taking that tracking device home with you. It is, as Frederick Lane suggests, time for a national discussion on the boundaries of employee privacy. (*The Naked Employee* by Frederick S. Lane, III, is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other booksellers.)