Language work: countable and uncountable nouns

A Look at the HELP box and decide if these nouns ~~from the fact file in 3B are~~ countable, uncountable or either, depending on the context. Write *C, U,* or *C and U*.

user _____	email _____	computing _____
edition _____	entertainment _____	interface _____
icon _____	technology _____	security _____	spyware _____

HELP box

Countable and uncountable nouns

- Countable nouns are people or things that we can count. They have a singular and a plural form (e.g. **file, program, system, application**).

- Uncountable nouns are things that we can't count. They have no plural form (e.g. **software, music, robotics, multimedia, networking, storage**).

  A lot of **software** *these days is open-source.*
  Not: *A lot of* **softwares** *these days* **are** *open-source.*

- Some words are countable in many languages but uncountable in English, and are used with a singular verb (e.g. **advice, damage, equipment, furniture, research, news, progress, homework**).

  The **advice** *he gave me* **was** *very useful.*

- Countable nouns must have a determiner (**a, the, my, this,** etc.) in the singular, although this is not necessary in the plural.

  I deleted **the file** *yesterday.*
  I lost more than 300 **files** *when my computer crashed.*

  We use **a** before a consonant sound and **an** before a vowel. The definite article **the** means *you know which one/ones I mean.*

An **icon** *is a small graphic.*
The **icons** *on the toolbar are used to …*

- We don't use **a/an** with uncountable nouns.

  Not: ~~*a robotics*~~

- We don't use **the** in generalizations with uncountable nouns or plural countable nouns.

  I like **music**.
  Not: *I like* ~~*the music.*~~
  Computer programs *are expensive.*
  Not: ~~*The* **computer programs** *are expensive.*~~

- Countable and uncountable nouns take different determiners.

  Many, few, a few only go with countable nouns.

  There are **many versions** *of Windows Vista.*

  Much, little, a little, a great deal of only go with uncountable nouns.

  I have **a little time** *free this afternoon if you want to meet.*

B Complete this text with *a, an, the* or nothing.

Linux is (1) _____ operating system and it was initially created as (2) _____ hobby by a young student, Linus Torvalds, at the University of Helsinki in Finland. Version 1.0 of the Linux Kernel* was released in 1994. (3) _____ Kernel, at the heart of all Linux systems, is developed and released under GNU General Public License, and its source code is freely available to everyone.

Apart from the fact that it's freely distributed, (4) _____ Linux's functionality, adaptability and robustness has made it the main alternative for proprietary Unix and Microsoft operating systems. IBM, Hewlett-Packard and other giants of the computing world have embraced Linux and support its ongoing development. More than (5) _____ decade after its initial release, Linux is being adopted worldwide, primarily as (6) _____ server platform. Its use as a home and office desktop operating system is also on the rise. The operating system can also be incorporated directly into (7) _____ microchips in a process called (8) _____ embedding, and it is increasingly being used this way in appliances and devices.

*The Kernel provides a way for software and other parts of the OS to communicate with hardware.