

Felten for CTO?

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As inauguration approaches, speculation has been heating up about Obama's pick for the newly-created position of CTO. Most of the names floated — Eric Schmidt, Steve Ballmer, Jeff Bezos — just seem ridiculous (would you really leave being CEO of Google, Microsoft, or Amazon for a White House job?), but I've recently heard one name that's gotten me excited: Princeton's [Ed Felten](#) ([blog](#)).

Felten came to national prominence in 2000, when the music industry held a contest to see if anyone could break their “digital watermarking” technology. Felten and his team broke it and was about to publish a paper explaining how, when the recording industry threatened to sue him if he did.

Since then, he's offered expert opinions on everything from Microsoft to voting machines and started the Center for Information Technology Policy at Princeton, which he directs, where he's pushed for more government transparency. He has the incredibly rare combination of being an absolutely first-rate technologist while also being able to clearly explain all of the relevant policy implications. Like [Science Advisor John Holdren](#), he'll do a fantastic job representing the consensus of technical experts on [every policy issue](#) that comes his way.