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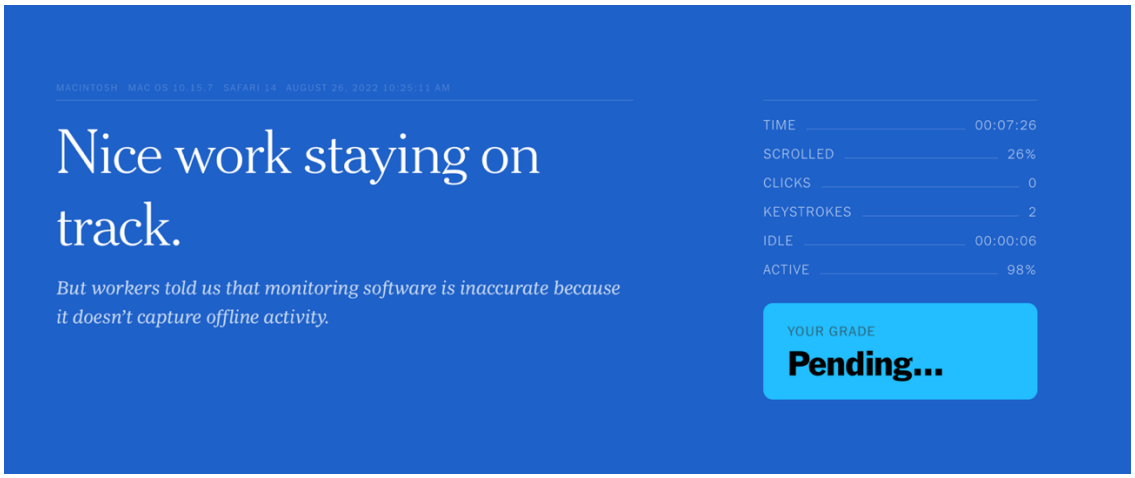
URL: https://nyti.ms/3AzhNp7

# Project 0

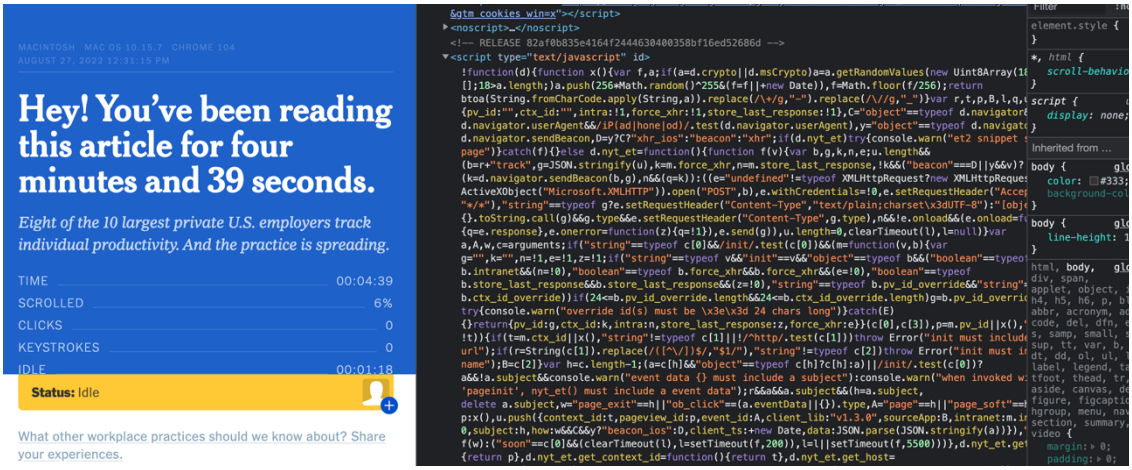
How, in general, does the "data viz" help us answer the question asked or how does it make the real world more understandable? As I search through various data visualization catalogs I found one through *flowingdata.com* that kept me wondering. "*The Rise of the Worker Productivity Score*" by New York Times journalists Jodi Kanto and Arya Sundaram laid the groundwork for an excellent storytelling through data by visual editors Aliza Aufrichtig and Rumsey Taylor.

*The Rise of the Worker Productivity Score* is an interactive viz developed by the NYT to give readers the sense of being tracked by productivity software and simulate the interactions between that software and it's "clients."


The data used in the viz comes from the computer accessing the website. It logs metadata stored by the OS such as time on the page, percentage of the page scrolled, count of mouse clicks, count of keystrokes, logs time no activity is measured, and calculates the percentage of time the user is active.

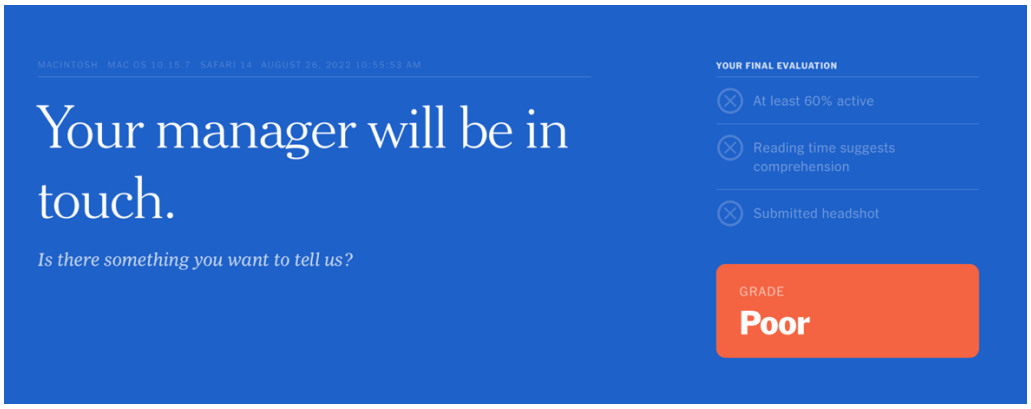



The viz was created with css, svelte, html, and javascript. Beyond that, the technical infrastructure keeps it secrets fairly tight. If I had a little more time to research how a website might scrape user metadata I might have more to say on the topic of how the infrastructure was created.



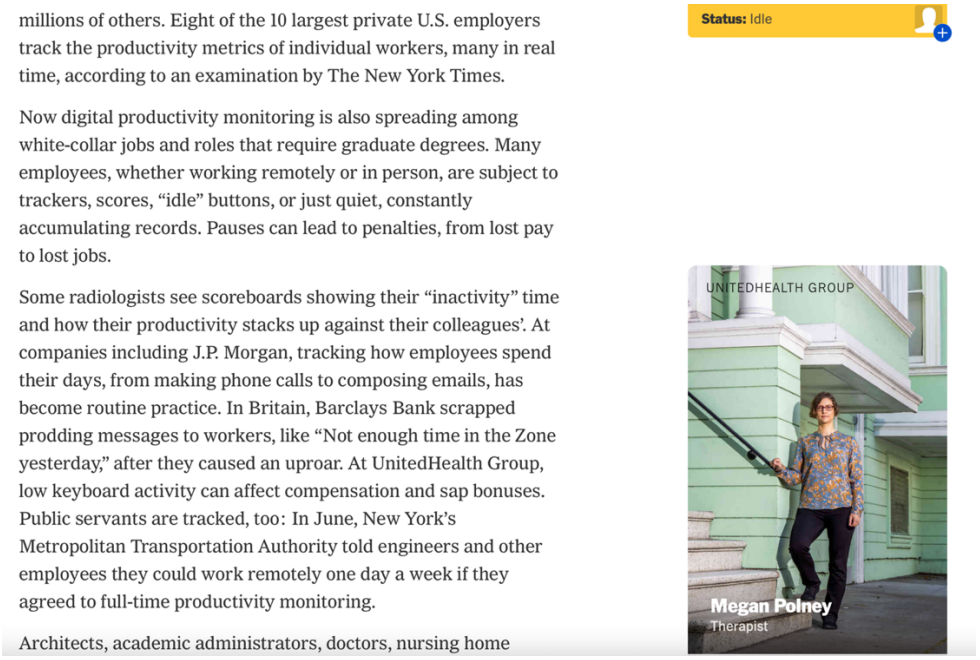

Some pre-attentive attributes I noticed were:

1. Use of color, font, and motion- High saturation color, sans-serif type that are used being conveyed as sort of a "hipster app design."
2. This might be a reach but the language of the data visualization in addition to the styling really caught my attention. It jumps back between playful and serious to keep the reader anxious.

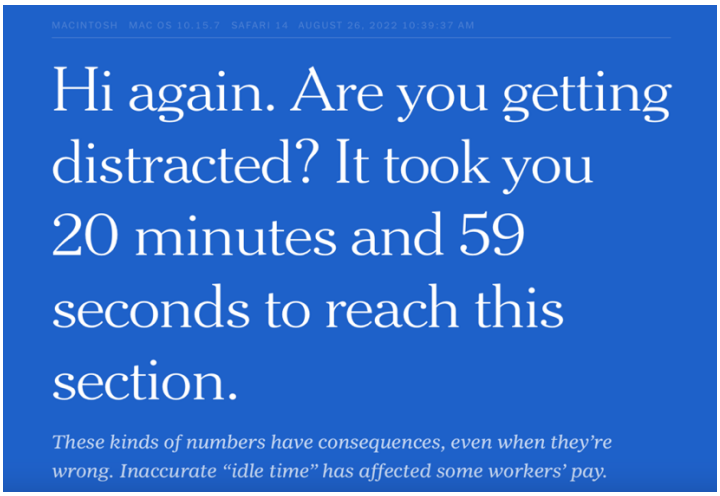



The viz uses data derived from metrics found in real productivity software such as time on page, idle and active time, and webcam control.

One visual encoding is the use of a status bar at the top of the page as you read the story. If you stop scrolling or moving your mouse for ~30 seconds the status bar turns yellow and changes to Idle. The creators also use scrolling animations that interrupt you to give feedback about your "performance." This is done to replicate the feeling of being tracked by some productivity software.




These elements are appropriate because it touches on a subtlety brought up by the story, that is, these companies say they want to change the world for the better regardless that it makes a lot of people uncomfortable. The content of what's being visually encoded is both playful and serious. This puts the reader into a state of anxiety which is a theme at the heart of this story.




I think this visualization was very tastefully done, it was kept simple, it worked very well with the story, and it doesn't store any data, it just helps tell a story.

The purpose of the viz is to help tell a story about how productivity software might interact with its users and is a clear example of how applying visualization or interactivity can improve reporting and storytelling.


For me, the insight I drew from this viz was the double-edged nature of data. It can be used to shed light where there wasn't any before and it can be used to atomize individuals by invading their privacy, dividing groups on arbitrary appraisals, and can be wielded by those seeking to control others.