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This one comes from the wacky files: Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is calling on IBM to release the source code for its OS/2 operating system sothat users will have a "viable" alternative to Windows. Nader, who knowsas much about computers as I do

Paul Thurrott
June 9, 1998

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This one comes from the wacky files: Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is calling on IBM to release the source code for its OS/2 operating system sothat users will have a "viable" alternative to Windows. Nader, who knowsas much about computers as I do about Corvairs, seems to think that IBMcan follow Netscape's lead and gain back marketshare by giving away itstechnological crown jewels. IBM, which once positioned OS/2 as a "betterWindows than Windows," has since backed off on promoting the operatingsystem as sales fell through the floor. At this time, it's not compatiblewith any Windows operating system made after 1991.

"We wouldn't give away [the OS/2 source code]," said Stephanie Rasmussen, a spokesperson for IBM. "We've invested a lot of money into OS/2 and it's aproduct we continue to sell to our customers today."

Well, sort of. OS/2 has changed dramatically over the past few years and its now targeted as a server connected to Web terminals. IBM isn't eventrying to sell the OS to consumers anymore.

"We don't see the natural order of things being that everyone gets their OSfrom Microsoft, especially with all the alternatives that are out there," said Nader crony James Love, director of the Consumer Project on Technology. "People do have choices, and they do have to be asked why they believe they can only buy a computer with Windows on it."

Because we want to run software, James, that's why

About the Author

Paul Thurrott

Paul Thurrott is senior technical analyst for *Windows IT Pro*. He writes the SuperSite for Windows, a weekly editorial for Windows IT Pro UPDATE, and a daily Windows news and information newsletter called WinInfo Daily UPDATE.

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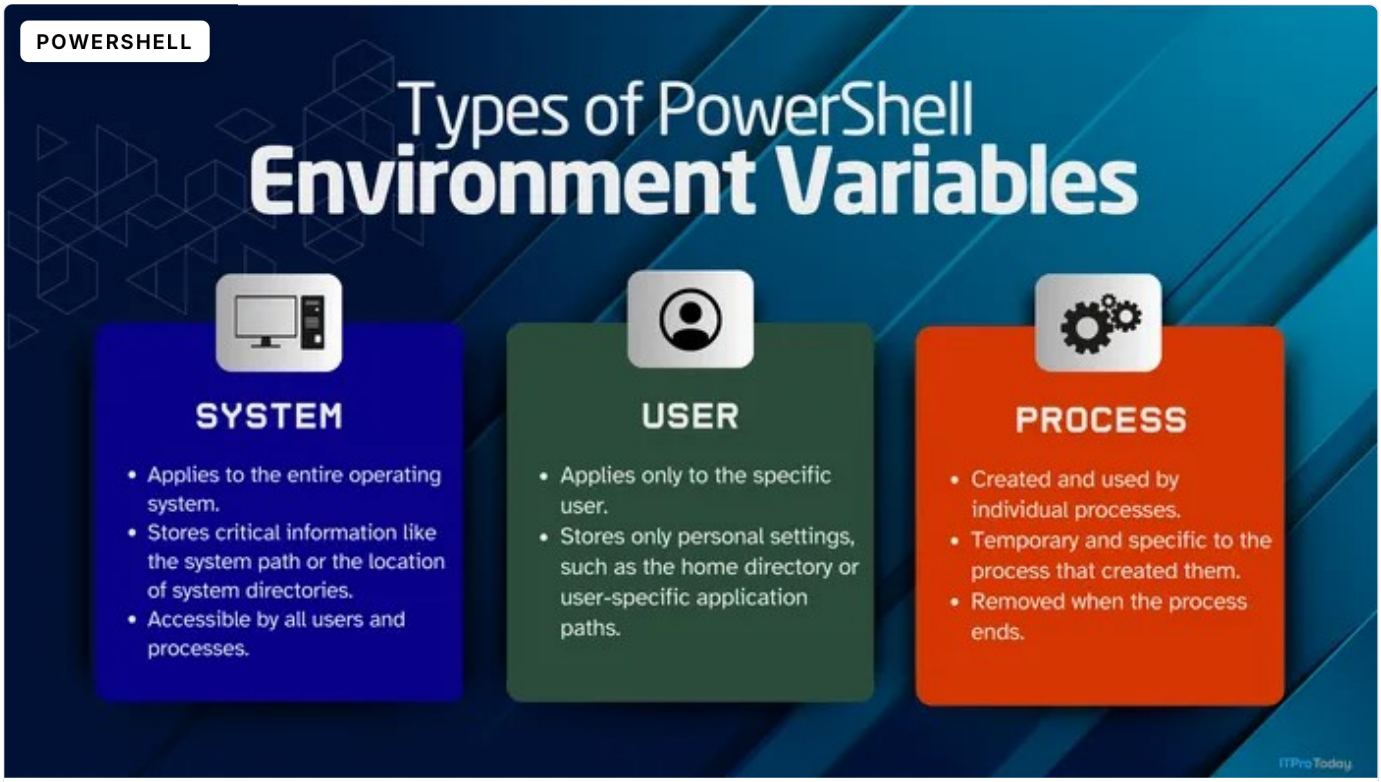

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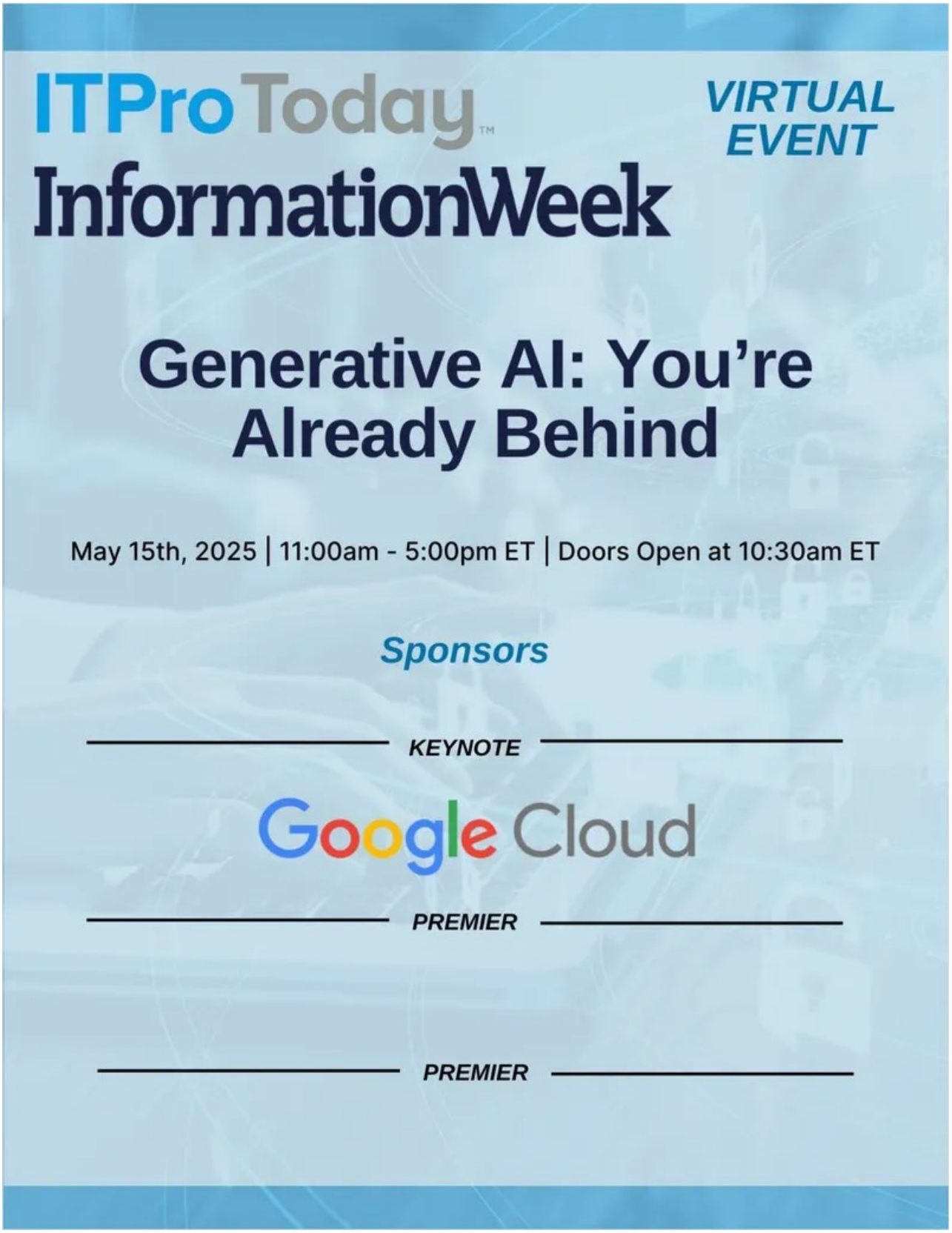
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