Hello,

I read that, following the Supreme Court's decision in Bilski v. Kappos, the USPTO is seeking input from the public about how to structure new guidance on which patent applications will be accepted in the future.

I work for a large news organization, in their IT group. Amongst other things, we are looking for innovative ways to advance journalism and the news industry. Frustratingly, many of the ideas we come up with turn out to be patented. Therefore, we simply don't pursue them, since we are uncertain as to how much it would cost to license the intellectual property. Even worse, we can also discover that practices that we have been pursuing one way or another for hundred years have more recently been patented. However, the cost of litigating is deemed to be too expensive and the results too unpredictable.

So, speaking as a private citizen, not as an official representative of my employer, I see the frustration, time wasting and uncertainty that software patents bring. Not to mention the disappointment of seeing new ideas not pursued, because it turns out that someone else thought of something similar before hand. Of course, there does need to be a system to ensure that innovators are rewarded and that huge investments of research capital can be protected. However, most software ideas can be simply and cheaply implemented. So, do software patens do anything than create a way to collect fees for ideas?

I'm sure this task is not an easy one. But I do hope that there is some reform and ideally a narrowing of the types of software patents that are granted.

Regards,

Stuart