

From: Todd Russell [e-mail redacted]
Sent: Saturday, September 25, 2010 5:19 PM
To: Bilski_Guidance
Subject: Software Patents destroy innovation

As a US citizen who works in the IT industry and is highly skilled in this area, I want to voice my opinion that software patents accomplish nothing other than to stifle innovation. The point of the patent system was to encourage innovation in a time when inventing things was difficult and took time. In the current computer industry, patents have the opposite effect. You all know this, and I am sure you don't need me to tell you this, but perhaps you just need to hear enough voices to prove that you have significant backing amongst the citizens to make what will be an unpopular decision among the corporations of America.

Just this past week, Microsoft was making public statements to the effect that they will be cranking up the lawyers to try and extort money out of Google for supposed patent offenses in the android operating system. They have done the same thing in the past to the Linux community. The software industry moves too fast and almost every new idea conceivable in this field has already been tried and patented, so there is no more need to learn from the ideas of others.

Too many people have ideas they think are original, only to find out later that they have been patented. Then they have to kill their products because they can't afford the licensing fees for the patent. How does this promote innovation? If you can't strike them down once and for all, can you at least limit the patent period to 1 year only? That is more than enough time for someone with a new idea to release a software product and get a jump on the industry. By the time the 1 year passes, they will already be moving on to the next iteration of the idea anyway.

Please, do something to improve the situation. People like me simply choose not to spend our time creating new software products for fear of violating patents that we can't afford to license. Promote innovation by killing software patents!

Peace,
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