

From: Matthew Woodward [e-mail redacted]
Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2010 7:03 PM
To: Bilski_Guidance
Cc: [e-mail redacted]
Subject: I Strongly Encourage You to Stop Issuing Software Patents

I'm writing to strongly encourage the USPTO to abolish software patents. As a software developer I see the harm software patents do on a daily basis, and the technology industry not to mention society at large would greatly benefit by the cessation of issuing software patents.

Most software patents are so incredibly vague as to be meaningless, and only serve the purpose of allowing the patent holder to threaten to sue (or actually sue) others who create (or already have created!) something even remotely similar to the vague business or technical process described in the patent.

Software patents don't hurt only developers and those in the IT industry, they are also dangerous for society at large. Society is increasingly dependent upon software, and patents take away the individual's rights to have full control over the devices and software with which they interact. In order for society to truly remain free, the software on which society runs must also be free.

The United States Supreme Court has never ruled in favor of the notion that software is patentable. As seen in the recent Bilski v. Kappos decision, the Supreme Court feels that patent eligibility should be defined extremely narrowly.

The USPTO can play an important role in the future of software, and the freedoms we enjoy as a society, by declaring that software is not eligible to be patented. The current software patents are vague, obvious, and extremely dangerous, and the stakes for society are far too high for things to continue in this fashion.

Only by completely eliminating software patents will innovation in technology thrive, and only by eliminating software patents will we truly remain free as a society.

Sincerely,
Matt Woodward
Principal IT Specialist
Office of the Sergeant at Arms, United States Senate

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<http://www.gnu.org/philosophy/no-word-attachments.html>