Software patents hurt individuals by taking away our ability to control the devices that now exert such strong influence on our personal freedoms, including how we interact with each other. Now that computers are essentially ubiquitous, it's easier than ever for an individual to create or modify software to perform the specific tasks they want done, and this is exactly what should be happening. It is more important than ever that they be able to do so. Even one software patent can put up an unjustifiable, legal hurdle for many aspiring developers.