Software should not be patentable, because software is math. Adding a computer to do that math is an obvious next step, and should not be rewarded with a patent.

At the very least, software patents should require working code just like patents for devices require blueprints; when the patent expires the knowledge contained therein should enrich the community, both by making the algorithm public and by making it clear what is and is not patented. That the code works is vitally important; we have seen far too many patents for things impossible at patent time but lucrative later, which wrecks havoc in an industry as quick-moving as ours which often finds a seemingly trivial insight suddenly central to how everything works.

The existing system of copious overbroad and ill-defined patents leads to the entire industry living in fear of a massive patent war, with everybody arming themselves with defensive patents and being overly cautious, with the result that we as a public lose out on innovative products. The USPTO can and should stop issuing software patents to put an end to this.

Seth A. Roby The Amazing Llama [e-mail redacted]  
"Life is like an exploded clown. It's really funny until you figure out what just happened."