I'm writing in regards to the request for comments on the Interim Bilski Guidance. I am a computer programmer currently working for Google, but I am writing this independently of any comments that Google may have.

I strongly encourage the USPTO to issue guidance that a method executed on a general purpose computer is not patentable. A general purpose computer is by definition capable of implementing any algorithm, including any implementable abstract idea or mathematical formula. Only a method which requires a special purpose machine should be patentable. An implementation of a method which runs on a general purpose computer should not be patentable.

I believe this is consistent with the Bilski ruling, which indicates that patent protection may be available when applying a mathematical formula to a known structure or process. When considered at the level of a computer program, a general purpose computer can not be considered a known structure or process, since it is capable of doing anything which can be described in an algorithm. Permitting a patent to apply in this domain would be similar to permitting a patent on pure human thought, which is generally considered to be out of bounds for patentability.

Thanks you for your attention to this comment.

Ian Taylor
1310 Bay View Place
Berkeley, CA 94708
[e-mail redacted]