

I am writing a a result of action taken by the IPIX corporation to protect its patents with respect to the use of fisheye lenses for panoramaic VR photography.

I understand how a patent can be issued for a particular method of processing images with fisheye lenses. However I do not understand how this then precludes anyone else from inventing or using a different process using fisheye lenses. Fisheye lenses have been in common use for decades. The IPIX patents effectively restrict the free use of these lenses which cannot be right.

A brief history of the remapping of fisheye lense images is available at the following address <http://www.worldserver.com/turk/quicktimevr/fisheye.html>. I hope that you will take a look and reconsider the IPIX situation. IPIX are using their financial muscle against people like Helmut Dersch who does not have the resources to fight them in court. The result is that they are winning unfair cases by default. I am sure that this is not what the patent laws are about.

IPIX has a right to protect its own proprietary software but this should not include fisheye lenses. They did not invent the fisheye lense but these patents are effectively giving them rights which amount to a patent on the lense. Other people should be free to develop different solutions to the same problem of stitching together fisheye images. As things stand someone like Apple could patent the use of all the other non fisheye lense focal lengths for QTVR authoring and effectively prevent anyone else from using anything other than their QTVR Authoring Suite for these particular lenses. This would be a ridiculous situation.

Two final points which may or may not be relevant.

Firstly the IPIX system is only available via digital cameras which take an add on fisheye adaptor. Although the camera manufacturers list these adaptors as lenses they are not primary lenses such as an 8mm fisheye for an SLR camera. Ask most photographers for the definition of a camera lense and ask him/her also to describe the add ons for these digital cameras and he/she will describe them as two totally different pieces of equipment. What the IPIX patent does by protecting the use of a system using fisheye adaptors is prevent the use of film based cameras and primary 8mm fisheyes using a different method of stitching images together.

Secondly the patents restrict the quality of work available to customers. IPIX is by any standard a poor quality substitute for work produced by the majority of photographers working in the field of VR, particularly those who use film based cameras and high quality scanning equipment.

Regards
Mike Bell

--

Mike Bell
ingham-bell.vr.ltd
Coulterenny House
Cairneyhill Road
Bankfoot
Perthshire
Scotland PH1 4AQ
Phone: 01738 787365
Mobile: 07720 510292