To whom it may concern,

As a programmer and developer I frequently find the patents that the USPTO approves to be appallingly weak. Often the patents to fail to meet the standard of "non-obvious" and simply consist of very logical ideas that have been done before over and over and over again in another context. I primarily work with databases and I am often very concerned about the overly broad interpretation that could be taken with almost every patent that revolves around storing data in a database. There is nothing novel, new, or innovative about storing anything in a database, especially relational databases using the SQL standard.

The current policy apparently in place at the USPTO does not foster innovation in software. Instead it fosters a culture where large corporations with large legal budgets cast out hundreds of patents for one of two purposes: 1) protecting themselves from future litigation or 2) perpetuating litigation as a business model. The second purpose is particularly insidious and it is often carried out by non-practicing entities in a process called "Patent Trolling" by it's detractors. In fact the developers and contributors of two of the most innovative pieces of software, UNIX and LINUX, have been the target of many patent trolls, the worst of which was SCO.

Put more simply though, the current USPTO policies toward patents essentially do nothing but favor large corporations with large legal departments. No small company or individual can truly develop and innovate with the economic fear imposed by current software patents.

Sincerely,

Shane Singleton