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Subject: The current system of software patents is clearly broken

Too many clearly obvious patents have been granted to inappropriate entities. The software field has become a haven for patent tolls and thereby severely limits creativity and the ability of small companies and individual programmers to create new works without fear of claims from left field and other spurious actions. I am convinced that this is also impeding the economic growth of the United States. It allows large and inefficient enterprises to maintain monopolies in ways that prevent innovation and do not foster new science.

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 near-ubiquitous, it's easier than ever for an individual to create or modify software to perform the specific tasks they want done -- and more important than ever that they be able to do so. But a single software patent can put up an insurmountable, and unjustifiable, legal hurdle for many would-be developers.

The Supreme Court of the United States has never ruled in favor of the patentability of software. Their decision in *Bilski v. Kappos* further demonstrates that they expect the boundaries of patent eligibility to be drawn more narrowly than they commonly were at the case's outset. The primary point of the decision is that the machine-or-transformation test should not be the sole test for drawing those boundaries. The USPTO can, and should, exclude software from patent eligibility on other legal grounds: because software consists only of mathematics, which is not patentable, and the combination of such software with a general-purpose computer is obvious.

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