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Sent: Monday, September 27, 2010 7:05 PM
To: Bilski_Guidance
Cc: [e-mail redacted]
Subject: End Software Patents

To Whom it May Concern,

As a student pursuing Computer Science in a major university, I assure you that I am fully capable of understanding the reasoning behind the allowance of patents on computer software. I, for one, would be extremely disparaged if a rogue engineer took the fruits of my labors and labeled them as their own. However, the issuance of software patents and the privatization of computer programming is not the proper way to address these threats.

It is fundamental to understand that at the most basic level, any computer algorithm is simply a set of instructions informing the computer what to do, much like a mathematical formula is a simple set of instructions telling a human what to do with a given set of numbers. The fact that a computer programmer can claim to own their set of instructions based simply on the fact that they discovered it, however, would be as nonsensical as Isaac Newton claiming, upon the formulation of the principles of gravity, that only he was allowed to use the calculations he derived.

Although the intentions behind software patenting may be benign, the inevitable privatization of mathematical truths is a grievous offense to those students like me, whose options and choices in software design will become crippled as the most efficient methods of programming are snatched up into the hands of their "owner." The United States Patent and Trademark Office is treating programmers like a group of children, encouraging the development of new intellect, but instead of fostering teamwork and the collaborative expansion of human knowledge, as soon as the fastest child learns to speak, the rest of us are left to find our own way to communicate, so as not to infringe upon the "already patented" and most efficient manner of communication.

The world cannot afford to come to a standstill in terms of the flow of information, and with computers and software being the primary instrument of future innovation, cutting the ability to solve problems freely and efficiently by issuing software patents is a step backwards in the course of progress.

Paul J