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Sent: Saturday, September 25, 2010 12:39 PM
To: Bilski_Guidance
Cc: [e-mail redacted]
Subject: Software patents

I'm writing this to ask that you take a stance against software patents.

As an average administrator at a small to medium sized business I don't have much of an available budget so I try to use community supported open source tools whenever possible.

Having to worry about who owns what is a problem, but from what I've seen often it's a simple matter of who has the resources to defend themselves. Software patent issues have the potential to severely limit our options as users, I feel they also may keep people from innovating and coming up with new ideas due to the fact the developers wouldn't be able to afford a legal battle.

Imagine somebody had invented the hammer and instead had only patented the handle, now everyone who uses a handle, something simple common sense would dictate for many tools, has to deal with this person. Society as a whole loses out on this and I believe we also lose out every time some software patent is granted.

The whole process seems to patent concepts rather than actual things, it's a function and there is always a good chance it's based on something that has been observed elsewhere. To sum up my opinion, software patents stifle innovation and the free flow of ideas and information. It is a possibility a few large players could control what basically amounts to "ideas" and lock them up for years. These current ideas have the ability to slow down creative people, it's like giving an artist a patent on using rectangular shapes in a painting.

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