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To: Bilski_Guidance; [e-mail redacted]
Subject: Software patents

I'm a small software developer and entrepreneur, and I live in fear that patent infringement may steal my company and life's work. There have been many software patents approved that are obvious ways to implement programming problems, or simple application of mathematical principals to software design and implementation. Furthermore, patents restrict correct interoperability and extensibility of systems because they govern how that data is loaded, processed, or viewed.

It is economically infeasible to pay for patent investigation on every page of code, or even just the "difficult parts" because there is little information you can give to narrow the search. The result is that we software entrepreneurs continue, hoping we have not inadvertently trespassed on someone's patent, or that we'll stay small enough to remain unnoticed by the portfolio patent companies. We hope that they won't come and sue us out of our company and lifestyle for implementing software in a way we found obvious.

I understand there exists a need to protect difficult, complex, and sophisticated problems requiring in-depth research and technically skilled people to discover and implement. If software patents remain, a high standard for a level of innovation and difficulty needs to exist so that those software patents cover implementation difficulty far outside of the possibility of accidental duplication.

Please restore the freedom of innovation to the small entrepreneur.

Thanks for reading,
Shane Holloway
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